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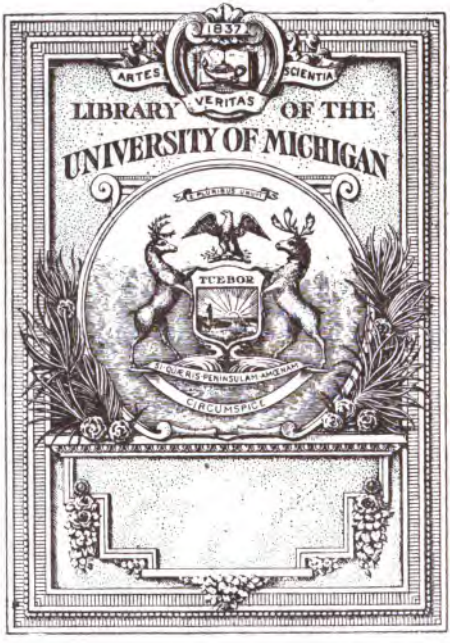
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MONSIEUR NASSON AND OTHERS

BY

GRACE HOWARD PEIRCE

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MONSIEUR NASSON AND OTHERS

BY

GRACE HOWARD PEIRCE

of CHOICE FICTION

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PREFACE.

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MONSIEUR NASSON.

Leaves from an Old Journal.

I.

In the summer of 1817 I made an extraordinary acquaintance in Switzerland. On a certain July day I found myself at Grindelwald, and soon set out from the hotel intending to take a stroll of about an hour, and with no other object in view than to get as near the glacier as possible. I mounted continually, and at last reached a narrow path on the rock where I was high above the glacier, with a wall of granite on the one hand and a sheer precipice of some hundred feet on the other. I had just made the reflection that a misstep might have serious consequences, when I slipped, grasped at the rock as I fell, and the next instant hung by my hands over the precipice. To raise myself was impossible; the rock sloped inward, and in that most horrible position I remained for a time which was long

enough for the suffering of a hundred deaths in anticipation.

At first I called for help, though in despair of anyone hearing me in that lonely place, but soon gave that up and simply clung in an agony, awaiting the terrible moment when I could cling no longer. My senses had nearly left me when I was suddenly brought back to life by hearing a human voice singing, and that not far away. I called once more, then, with all the strength I could muster, and, a moment later, saw—for my head was just on a level with the path, as I held with one hand to a projection in the middle of it and to the edge of the rock with the other—I saw a man rush up, who, as he reached me, threw himself on the path and reaching down seized me below the arms. But now, whether I had held on so long that I could not let go or whether I dared not, he, at any rate, had all the difficulty in the world to induce me to loose my gripe on the rock and put one arm around his neck. At last he lifted me a little by main force; I grasped him, then, felt my knee against something, struggled, and the next thing of which I was conscious was of lying at full length on the path while my preserver bent over me and talked solicitously. It is singula how distinctly I can recall the sensations of tha moment. I felt as I should suppose an infant mus feel when people talk to it. Gradually, however,

began to derive some ideas from what he was saying, and found that he proposed to make me as comfortable as the circumstances permitted and then go in search of help. But while he divested himself of his coat and folded it together to put under my head, I found my voice and began to thank him feebly for his blessed intervention to save me from an awful death. He disclaimed at once any especial credit in the matter, declaring that while he was rejoiced to have been at hand, yet as what he had done had been without risk to himself, there was no occasion to make much of it. With regard to the risk, I was not so sure of there being none when once I had clutched him, and, in any case, I was bound to have my say out.

I have not yet mentioned that my preserver spoke French, and never in my life was I more glad than then of such knowledge as I possessed of that language; for certainly it would be more endurable to be silent at a dinner-party or even in a bevy of pretty girls, than to be reduced to dumb-show with a man who has just saved your life. I said, therefore, as best I was able, what I felt on that subject and then begged him not to think of going for help, inasmuch as I had sustained no injury whatever beyond a few scratches and bruises, so that I should presently be able to get back to the hotel with no other aid than his if I might venture to claim it. In

this, seeing that I was really recovering rapidly, he acquiesced, advising me, however, to lie quietly for some time yet and make no effort to speak.

So I watched him silently as he stood leaning against the rocky wall and looking at the wild scene about us or turning to me with, as I thought in my gratitude, the sweetest smile and the most amiable expression of countenance I had ever beheld.

He was a fine, tall, broad-shouldered fellow, of a stronger build—to my good fortune—than one often sees among his countrymen; very young—I decided at once that he must be two or three years my junior—and with a face which, if not actually handsome, was by reason of a fresh complexion, dark eyes, and curling brown hair, extremely taking and agreeable. I observed further that his clothing was fashionably made and his linen fine and delicate.

Before long I was able to get up and then to walk; so we set off, he a step in advance, I with my hand on his shoulder and keeping as far from the edge as possible lest I should turn giddy. When we were past that ticklish place and stopped awhile for me to rest, I bethought myself that it was time we knew what to call each other, and accordingly took out my card. He followed suit with his, and, smiling at the absurdity of such civilized compliments amid the wilds of nature, but both of us

doubtless glad to find out whom we had there, we exchanged. On the card I received was, M. Henri Nasson.

After this little interlude we went on steadily, for I was quite recovered. Dwelling, however, all the while, on what I had gone through, I asked him how he happened to be there just in the nick of time. He said there was a fine view of the glacier not far from the scene of my accident, and he had started for that point, having visited it already the day before and been much struck with the grandeur of the spot.

"Indeed!" said I. "Then let us go there together: to-morrow, if you like."

I could feel a hesitation in his manner, as if this proposal took him by surprise, but when he said merely that he had arranged to leave Grindelwald the next day, I thought no more of it.

By the time we got back to the hotel the hour for the *table-d'hôte* was long past, and I asked my companion to give me the honor and pleasure of his company at dinner. That seemed to me the merest matter of course, but again there was a decided hesitancy. I might have taken it ill, only that I conceived his backwardness in accepting was due to a certain reserve, a sort of shyness which I began to notice in him. Altogether he was not just what I had thought at first; flushed then with the pleasure

of having rendered such timely service there was a brightness about him which faded afterward; I was quite surprised to discover in the course of our walk that his expression was naturally grave, almost sad; that made him look older. However, as before said, I was not hurt when he suggested that I might still be feeling the effects of my accident too much to desire his society; I only insisted that his society was precisely what I desired. I would take no denial, and he yielded.

We passed a pleasant evening together, though all I now remember of our conversation is an amiable diversity of opinion as to the merits of Mlle. Georges and Mlle. Duchenois; I thought the latter the better actress, while he was all for Georges. Naturally we were of one mind about Mlles. Mars and Talma. But it is not surprising that I recall so little of what he said, for he was no talker; on the other hand, the most flattering listener I ever met in my life. I can see him now, his dark eyes fixed attentively, his serious face relaxing into a smile in the right places, always ready with whatever sentiment was called for—wonder, indignation, sympathy, or with the question that helps the story on. And this quite simply and unfeignedly, as I have reason to know since.

One thing he did say, however; he told where he was going next, namely, straight to Geneva and

thence home to Paris, and upon that there passed a momentary shadow over our harmony. It happened that I also was going to Geneva, for my aunt, who had been taking the waters at Aix-les-bains, had arranged to join me there, with my sister Fanny, in order that they might visit Chamouni under my escort, and now, hearing of Nasson's plans, it instantly occurred to me that I should do well to go with him rather than stay a few days longer around Interlachen and Thun, as I had proposed. I was not quite sure, either, just when my aunt meant to reach Geneva, and it was advisable that I should be on hand to receive her; also it would lessen my expenses considerably to take a carriage with Nasson, but my chief reason was for companionship's sake. There are times enough when one must be alone, and I am for company when I can get it—if it is agreeable, as his had been thus far. So I was now really annoyed to find him once more apparently taken aback by my advances. After all that evening together! After he had shared my bread and salt, so to speak, and when he seemed to find pleasure in my society! I could not understand it, and let him see that I did not. It was my turn to be stiff. But he flushed up then, and was so evidently concerned at my thinking his manner ungracious, that he said something about having been, by force of circumstances, all his life much alone, which made him

awkward in responding to friendly advances, and assured me so earnestly that indeed my company would be most welcome and agreeable to him if his were to me, and so on, that I soon relented, and it was settled we should travel together.

When we parted for the night I remember it came over me again, in full force, how I owed it to him that I was to sleep in my bed, and that, instead of lying out there shattered on the rocks, I had a good many years of life before me that, God willing, I meant to make something of. That all came over me, with a warm feeling around the heart, and I suppose if I had been a Frenchman I should have embraced him; but he was not demonstrative, either, and I think he knew what I meant when I held his hands hard, for there was something at the same time in my eyes that I was a little bit ashamed of,—though I verily believe there was in his, too,—and so we said good-night.

One little incident only of the journey I will recall. There was often a motley company of beggars collected around the inn where we dined or slept, to see the strangers off and scramble for such small cash as they had to distribute. It was a nuisance, at least I thought so, but Nasson really laid in a stock of coins, I believe, for these occasions, and seemed to enjoy the delight of those who got them.

What I started to tell was a pretty kindness of

his to one peculiarly wretched old woman. She was so decrepit as to have no chance at all among the swarming children; every time she hobbled to pick up something, one of them got ahead of her, and made off with it. But when Nasson saw that, he was indignant. "For shame!" he cried, "for shame! Have none of you a grandmother? Stand out of the way and let that old woman come up here!" She came, and he slipped his fingers into another pocket, and leaning well forward so that I should not see, dropped something into her hand. She had barely time to look at it and burst into blessings on "his lordship" when we were off, but her shrill voice quavered after us, wishing him "a long life and a happy one!"

I glanced at him just then, and such a grave look on that young face! One would have supposed length of days was a deplorable prospect. Then suddenly it flashed upon me what might be the matter with him. For when a man is young and has plenty of money what on earth should make him look solemn unless the one he loves is wedded to another? That was precisely what I wanted, to explain his pensive airs. And I knew all about it myself, having been through the agony before I was out of my teens, although now I was heartless enough to mingle amusement with my silent sympathy. All the same, I felt not a little interest in his

love affairs, even to reflecting that his affliction, if such he had, might be due to cruel parents rather than a rival; possibly she was not rich enough or grand enough; or perhaps he had aspired too high. Had he been only half as expansive as some of his country-people, I should have known all about it long before the journey's end; but no! he was as mum as to what presumably lay next his heart as the veriest Anglo-Saxon of us all.

The same day that we reached Geneva, my aunt and sister arrived there; and of course the first thing to tell them was my adventure, and they were all eagerness to see and thank my new friend. He was not aware that they had come, for, feeling too much fatigued to appear in public, they had been served in the pretty suite of apartments which I had chosen for them, so that after dinner I was able to take him to their room as if it had been mine and introduce him to the ladies before he knew where he was. It was a necessary ruse, for he was so shy that he might not have gone at all had I explained beforehand.

His confusion was extreme, but he made a good impression in spite of that; indeed his blushes were becoming. Meanwhile, my aunt, long accustomed to French society, expressed very elegantly her sense of obligation to him as the preserver of my life, and Fanny was not behindhand with her tribute, he

protesting as usual that it was nothing, but still looking pleased and happy, as well he might. And when that was all over, I was quite surprised to see how they drew him out and discovered gifts and graces in him which had remained unknown to me. He could sing, for instance, and he could sketch. Fanny of course did both, just released from school as she was and expecting to be launched into society in Paris the next winter, under my aunt's protection. Fanny sang first to the piano, but when Nasson modestly said that he could only accompany himself on the guitar, the ladies were charmed with the idea of hearing him sing to that instrument, and insisted that he must fetch it, which he finally did and gave us some old French *chansons*. They were the only things he knew, he said. And he probably sang them well, for my aunt and sister were much pleased with the performance.

There was now nothing more said about an immediate return to Paris; that idea appeared to be abandoned, and for the next two or three days Nasson walked with us, drove with us, and sat with us quite as a matter of course, and sketched with Fanny from the balcony or at the places of interest which we visited.

I was rather surprised therefore when my aunt asked me one day abruptly and, I thought, even a little severely:

"Robert, who *is* this Monsieur Nasson?"

"Why, aunt," I began, "he is a man who saved my—"

"Yes," said she, "and very much obliged to him we all are, but who is he? What are his connections? Where does he live? Who are his parents?"

And at that I could only look blank. Being something of a talker myself, I dare say I had given him a pretty good account of my life—past, present, and even future, so far as I could forecast it, in that I was to follow the law, as my father and grandfather had done before me, but that he had told me anything I really could not remember. No, certainly he had never said a word about what *he* meant to do—leaving his father and grandfather quite out of the question. Upon a little reflection, however, I thought he must expect to be a gentleman of leisure, for the few remarks of his that I could recall which bore in any way upon himself went to prove that he had considerable spare time on his hands. With regard to music and drawing, for instance, he declared that he had no pretensions to excel, but having received some instruction in those accomplishments as a child, had kept them up merely to pass the time. And again, a fancy of his which he mentioned for taking long walks in Paris and finding out old streets and curious landmarks, he had pronounced to be another excellent way of passing time. Also

he had read a good deal, not very profitably, as he said, but for the same cogent reason—*pour passer le temps*.

That was all I could tell my aunt, and she did not appear very well satisfied. The cause for her disquietude was naturally not far to seek, but it seemed to me ridiculous. Little Fanny! And if *I* understand anything of such matters, there was no sign of danger. While my aunt and I wrote letters at the centre table and they two, on the balcony, were sketching a view of the lake—the boats with their graceful lateen sails and the Jura in the distance—it was just as quiet outside as in. And when the works of art were finished, and Fanny's left something to be desired, he would point out her errors as seriously as any old drawing-master; she looking down on her paper and making little idle flourishes with her pencil, and he—looking at her, to be sure. But what of that? Who would not look at a pretty young girl?

In the hope of easing my aunt's mind a little, I imparted to her my suspicions that Nasson had had a disappointment, but she only replied drily that she observed no indications of that, and I could see that she grew more and more dissatisfied with the existing state of things; she never was content when they were on the balcony until she had discovered that it was damp and Fanny must come in. Then she, her-

self, would take the chief part in the conversation with Nasson, and I used to admire the cleverness with which she led up to this or that opportunity for his giving some account of himself. But he never did. He simply listened to her accounts with just that charmingly interested manner which I have already described.

However, in spite of his reserve, we were destined to get a glimpse of one of his ancestors; which happened on this wise: He had brought his portfolio, at Fanny's request, to show his entire collection of drawings, and in the course of turning them over there was discovered among them a picture in pastel of a child. Nasson uttered a slight exclamation at the sight of it, and murmured that he had not known it was there. It was really a remarkably pretty thing and very well done, a little boy in a brilliant old-time costume of black and scarlet, while for a background there was an indication of wainscoting and portraits on the walls which gave the impression of a fine room in an antique mansion.

"This looks as if it might be a family portrait," remarked Fanny.

"It is," he said briefly, and then added, after a moment, "it is from a picture of my great-grandfather at the age of seven. I found it a good subject to copy."

So there was something we knew of him at last! He had a great-grandfather. And I passed that little gentleman over to my aunt, feeling that he could hardly fail to produce an agreeable impression upon her. As I held the picture in my hand, however, and looked at it closely, I happened to notice that two or three words had been written under it and erased. She also noticed it and said to me afterward:

"One does not like to be suspicious, but it is very easy to claim a great-grandfather in pastel. That looked to me as if it had had a title written and carefully rubbed out."

I refused with some warmth to think so ill of him, and declared that there was nothing about him which suggested an adventurer. She admitted that he was not exactly her idea of an adventurer, but added that as she had not often been in a position to meet such gentry, she of course could not judge.

I felt the reproach in that, and she presently continued:

"Besides, my dear Robert, your Monsieur Nasson has really very peculiar ways. I cannot at this moment instance anything in particular, and you men never observe such things; but I assure you, he does not make the impression on me of having been used to such society as ours. Not that he is not courteous, for he is—very, but in a fashion of his own, not like other people."

"Ah well," I said, "I could explain that, for he had spoken himself once of having lived much alone."

"But why?" inquired my aunt. And that, to be sure, I did not know.

I fancied I saw what she meant, though, by his "ways." He had not perhaps the very latest fashion in saying and doing certain little things; it was possible that he did not enter and leave a room in just the style affected by the exquisites of the diplomatic circle in Paris. But if he was courteous, was not that enough? For my part, I was glad that, as my aunt said, we men did not notice such trifles.

Since he was "my" Monsieur Nasson, however, it plainly behooved me to take care of him, and this I resolved to do. Our departure for Chamouni was fixed for the day after the next, and I thought it would be a pity if, during the short interval, I could not keep him out of the way, and by means of all possible friendliness on my own part conceal from him the fact that he was not precisely a *persona grata* to my aunt.

And still, what she had said did make a certain impression on me. I found myself thinking afterward how very reticent he had indeed been, and that it *was* singular that I should not have the slightest idea even of where he lived in Paris. But it appeared as if he must soon reveal as much as that, for knowing that I should be in Paris before I went home, he

could hardly fail to say that he hoped to see me, which would necessitate his giving some address. As for my aunt, it was plain that she intended to pass no compliments, and I wondered how she would get over the leave-taking without asking him to call. But that she would be equal to the occasion I had no manner of doubt; it was I who did not expect to be equal to it, picturing to myself beforehand poor Nasson's mortification.

Altogether, I felt quite guilty when I went to his room to ask him to take a stroll with me, and rather relieved that he should be out, probably taking a stroll by himself—*pour passer le temps*. It must have been rather a long one, for he did not appear until the close of the day, when he presented himself in the dining room looking very low-spirited.

I had registered a vow that if the town of Geneva afforded any public entertainment that evening, of no matter what description, I would carry him off to it, and as soon as we rose from the table I went to consult with our host on the subject, and then to my aunt's room to inform her that she was not to have the delight of our society. It was all in vain! Not only had Nasson stolen a march on me and established himself there—as he certainly had a right to be, when I had taken him with me so often—but Mr. and Mrs. C——L——, who had but just heard of our being in Geneva, had come with their two

daughters to call, and going out was no longer to be thought of.

Poor Nasson was much out of place among us all, talking eagerly as we were of home and things and people unknown to him, though to be sure, as we spoke English, which he did not understand, the subject of our conversation was neither here nor there so far as he was concerned. I really quite forgot him until I heard Fanny trying to make him talk, and noticed Miss Caroline L—— turning her eyes in that direction. Quick-witted and good-natured as she is, she soon saw what was the matter, and declared that we younger members of the company must have a game; that would bring us all together, she said.

So we were presently seated around the table, and she indoctrinating us into the mysteries of *Lyrics*, as she called it. Each person wrote a word on a slip of paper, then doubled it out of sight, and changing the order of the letters that composed it, wrote them at the head of the slip; upon that the papers were shuffled; each player drew one and made of the letters some word or words which must be incorporated in a rhyme. If you could guess the original word it was so much the better, but anything that made sense, or, more properly speaking, nonsense, would answer.

Here, also, there was the difficulty of two languages which we had heedlessly taken no account of at first, but it was finally pronounced that Fanny, just out of a French boarding-school, and I with my "known proficiency" ought to be able to support the French end of the table with M. Nasson, who, the L——'s declared, would lose nothing by not understanding their English rhymes, while they could perfectly appreciate the French poems which we should be sure to produce.

So we played one round pretty successfully, except that the person for whom all this had been set on foot took it as seriously as if he had never "assisted" at the game before in his life, and seemed bewildered by the laughter and *badinage* that went to and fro. Even when Miss Caroline L—— addressed him in her English-French, which from her lips sounded so excessively pretty, he answered in monosyllables and looked no more animated than a tombstone. It was only when Fanny spoke, whether in French or English, to him or to anyone else, that his interest was aroused. I could not help seeing this, and it was from some rather serious reflections on the subject that I suddenly woke to find everyone waiting for me to write my word for the second round. And I could think of nothing at all! My mind seemed absolutely vacant. The situation was fast becoming ridiculous, and they all laughing, so in

desperation I hastily scribbled "Nasson." The next instant I could have found fifty words instead, and would have given a good deal to get my slip back again, but it was too late. I knew what a mistake it was to introduce a chance for personalities, and presently as ill-luck would have it, I recognized, from the manner of its folding, my paper in Fanny's hands. Instead of seeing at once, however, what the two n's, two s's, an a and an o stood for, I found to my surprise that she had made something else out of it, for I heard her say to Nasson in a low voice:

"*Aidez-moi, monsieur!* Who was Sanson? I connect him disagreeably with your revolution, but I can't remember what he did."

He looked at her and was so slow in answering that it was I who said:

"He chopped heads off."

"Oh, yes, the executioner!" She reflected a few moments and then began to write. I was a good deal relieved, thinking no harm could come of that, at all events, and when it was her turn she read,

"Il y a du bourreau, O Sanson,
Jusqu'en ton nom;
Car il s'y trouve vraiment
Un son de sang."

Then turning the paper, she exclaimed, with an air of disappointment:

"Why, I thought, of course, I had guessed it! It is *your* name, monsieur."

I was just preparing to criticise her poetical effort and ask what sort of a *sound* she conceived blood to have, when Nasson suddenly pushed back his chair with more noise than was customary to his movements, started up, and rushed rather than walked out of the room, leaving amazement and consternation behind him.

Everybody began to exclaim what could be the matter! and then to declare that he had been taken very ill—that he had looked terribly pale—that he was faint.

Fanny spoke last and, I thought, was probably right when she said she feared it was her rhyme that had been taken ill, that it was very thoughtless in her, and she ought to have known it might be a painful subject, for he had perhaps lost all his family and friends in that dreadful time.

There seemed a sort of light to dawn on me with that,—it would explain so much,—and even my aunt, who at first had kept very cool and worn an expression which I interpreted to mean that any kind of disturbance might be expected from "my" Monsieur Nasson, looked now a little interested.

But if this conjecture was correct and he was not ill, there seemed to be no necessity for hurrying after him immediately. The excitement had broken up

our party, the L——s began to take leave, and I offered myself as a supplementary escort to the young ladies, and was accepted. It was just as well to give Nasson an opportunity to compose himself before I went to express our regrets that so unfortunate a topic should have been touched upon.

It was some little time, therefore, before I stopped at his room on the way to my own. I knocked very gently, on the just possible chance that he *was* ill and had gone to bed; then, as I seemed to hear "*Entrez!*" I opened the door. But I was mistaken, the room was dark, or rather there was only the moonlight that fell across the floor and showed the bed untenanted, and pieces of furniture looming up dimly around the walls; it was a large chamber and, at first, I did not see Nasson at the further end of it, kneeling at a window, with his head on his arms and the moonlight streaming over him.

I went out and closed the door softly, feeling shocked at my intrusion.

I kept thinking of him while I lay awake. He was too young to have known anything of the Revolution personally, but it might easily have altered the whole course of his life and left him alone in the world. I don't know why, seeing that the victims of that insane fury were of every class, it should just then suddenly have come into my head that perhaps he was not what he appeared to be. I

remembered that pretty little great-grandfather with his lordly posture and picturesque costume, and it occurred to me that if my aunt thought Nasson unused to such society as ours, there might be more ways than one of accounting for that. What if he had never found himself before in circumstances so lowly? What if his odd, simple name covered a distinguished incognito? What if he were—. But that thought never took any actual shape in my mind. I suppose I was asleep the next moment.

II.

I AM an early riser and often take a walk before breakfast, so the following morning I was up while the house was yet quiet, except for some preparations for departure—persons moving cautiously about and the porter carrying luggage downstairs. Later the French *diligence* came jingling along and stopped before the hotel to pick up a passenger, as it often did. I was dressed by that time and went to the window, but all I saw was our host making his bow on the sidewalk, and the coach rattled off again. He and a number of the servants were still standing about when I went downstairs, the latter

with the satisfied air of those who have just received ample proof that their services are appreciated; but our host advanced to meet me with an expression of condolence on his countenance.

"Ah, monsieur, if you had come but a few moments sooner! Your friend is gone! He received news last night which must have called him immediately to Paris, and he asked me to give you this," handing me a letter he held. "I told him you were often up early and offered to send to your room, but he would not have you disturbed."

I took my letter and walked away with it toward the lake shore, where I generally went of a morning. I was in no haste to open it. It was sealed with a coat-of-arms, which confirmed my suspicions that he was something other than he appeared, and my first feeling was that the termination of the masquerade was not precisely flattering to me. For it amounted to this: So long as he could pass himself off as Nasson, I was good enough for him, but in his proper person, the acquaintance would apparently be troublesome, wherefore he took French leave and our pretty little friendship was over.

Nevertheless, curiosity soon gained the upper hand —it was a good thick letter, he had told the whole story now, at all events—and coming to a bench beside the lake I sat down, broke the broad seal and

proceeded to read, in indescribable bewilderment, what follows:

"MONSIEUR:—What shall I say? My conduct of this evening will have explained itself; you know all, and I am only too well aware that you will consider excuses impossible. Yet I cannot help but write, not to defend the tacit deception I have practiced, but at least to show how strong the temptation was to which I yielded. And I even believe if you could know how little I have gained by my stolen pleasure, how inexpressibly bitter the ending of it is, you would hardly grudge it to me. Those lines—all the more cruel that the intention was so innocent! And then, when my guilty looks betrayed me, the sudden, terrible suspicion, the change on every face as I glanced around—these are things, monsieur, which will be with me to my dying day.

"But first of all, lest you should think me more culpable even than I am, and suppose me pretending to an ease of circumstances impossible for a family so situated as mine, let me say that my father has a sufficient private fortune to enable him to give his only son any advantage which it is possible for him to enjoy. In this I am no cheat; I have a right to travel on the footing you have seen me assume. Indeed, had it been my intention to deceive and give myself importance, I might have taken quite another name. It is a well authenticated tradition in our family that the first of our race to devote himself to the office which has since descended among us from father to son was a nobleman of the name of De Longval, whose coat-of-arms we still possess. I will not trouble you with the story of how he fell from his estate to the position his descendants have since occupied; my only reason for mentioning this fact

with regard to my origin is in order to show that if I had wished to play a part, I might have been to a certain extent justified in assuming a title, even though the only one my father can now claim is that of Monsieur de Paris."

"Gracious powers!" I exclaimed to myself aloud, and the letter sank in my hand; for until I saw it in black and white I had not been able to believe it, I had hoped there was some mistake. And then it came to me in a sudden flash of recollection that I had seen his father!

It was only a few months before that I was riding out to St. Denis with a young nobleman who, including me in his admiration for everything American, had undertaken to show me the sights of Paris and the evirons. It was the first spring day of the season, one of those lovely mornings full of promise when the sky is blue and the air soft and everything is fresh, after a long rain.

In a narrow street of the Faubourg St. Denis we came upon a little crowd collected near one of the rather imposing houses that are found in all the older parts of Paris, imposing because very little is seen of the house itself; it stands back from the street in aristocratic seclusion, with a courtyard in front and a glimpse of garden behind—perhaps some blossoming trees looking over a wall; so it was in this instance as I glanced in at the open gate. My companion uttered an impatien

exclamation, touched up his horse and sprang ahead, while I on the contrary, with the curiosity of a stranger, reined in a little to see what was coming.

Directly, there rolled out of the courtyard a large, old-fashioned coach, in which sat a man bolt upright in the middle of the back seat, with his arms folded and looking straight before him with a singularly impassive expression of countenance. On the opposite seat were two other men, evidently satellites of this dignitary. As the coach turned into the street, the rough-looking assemblage of men, women, and children parted to let it through, while a peculiar sound passed as it were from lip to lip, like a prolonged ah! It was plainly not an expression of good will.

When I rejoined my companion, he looked half annoyed and half amused at my delay.

"That was the *executioner!*" he exclaimed with an emphasis of contempt. "I called to you to come on, but you did not hear. He is going to the *conciergerie* for some poor wretch."

And then he added that that man's father had beheaded Louis XVI., and that his ancestors had done the hanging and burning and torturing and breaking on the wheel in Paris and the surrounding district for years and years back, until the family of Sanson had become a species of aristocrats among

hangmen. Once involved in the infamy, they had clung to it, so that when one of them died leaving a son only seven years old, the mother solicited his father's place and emoluments for him and had her prayer granted, and though the child could not perform the functions of his office, executions were legalized by his presence on the scaffold. In those bygone days the dishonor was, at all events, well paid.

The executioner lived in a certain style, and even practiced the amusements of a gentleman in his leisure hours. For there was a story of his hunting one day and seeking shelter from a storm, at a *château* where he was taken for a man of quality and invited to sit down to supper with the host and his friends. He, nothing loath after a long day's hunting, shook the rain from his feathered hat and went bravely in to the feast, and it was, "A *couvert* for monsieur!" and they filled his glass. But in the end somebody recognized him, and then they shattered at his feet the glass he had drunk from, and he fled from their scorn out again into the night and storm.

All this came back to me as I sat there holding the letter. The executioner did not hunt any more n swagger about in a plumed hat, but his son migh employ his elegant leisure in playing the guitar an singing songs and sitting on the balcony *with m*

sister! When I thought of that I was ready to tear the letter to bits and toss it into the lake. For the fellow had deceived me vilely! Did he think, perhaps, that Americans would take up with a man whom the very ragamuffins of Paris scorned? He had talked more than once about "the beauty of republican simplicity." But republicans were not quite so simple as that. So I worked myself into a rage until I remembered that the tone of the letter was not that of impudent confidence. Then I picked it up again and went on.

If he had wished to play a part he might have called himself a nobleman. Then the letter continued:

"But I had no such thought. My only idea was to mingle, for once, freely with my fellow-creatures. And I believed it could do them no wrong. For wherein were they injured to exchange a few chance words with me, if they did not know and could never know that it was the executioner's son? Alas! I may say, too, wherein was I benefited? I found I had lived too long in a world of my own to be able to meet other people in theirs.

"But with you the case was different. First, no doubt, it was the happy part assigned to me in your accident which put me at ease. And then, you were so grateful, you thanked me so warmly, you looked at me with such interest; I knew you liked me—and I had never had a friend! But also I began to feel now, for the first time, that I was practicing deceit. I seemed to see that here I *was* doing a wrong. For I said to myself: 'If he knew

who you were would he ask you to his table? Would he claim your company? Would he choose out the executioner's son to give him his confidence, to tell him his joys and hopes, his memories and prospects,—his whole happy life?' It was a temptation of which you, who have troops of friends, will hardly be able to form an idea, but I struggled against it. I think, if you recall the circumstances, you must do me the justice to admit that it was you who kept me when I would have gone. And I was weak and yielded. I yielded time and again when I fought the battle over with myself. I said always, 'Just one day more, only one.' And so the end came. It was just one day too many. But for that, I might have carried home with me memories which, in spite of all the pain they must have had, would yet have made a bright place in my life for ever after. And would you really have been the worse? In all I have said I have been looking at the matter as from your—from the world's point of view. I know the estimation we are held in, and I accept it as a fact, but that is not to say I acquiesce in it. Far from that I consider it a burning wrong. For if the office of executioner is a necessary one, if he is a functionary of the state, the state should see to it, for its own honor, that the office is not reputed vile.

"But I waste words in demonstrating this; I am persuaded that neither you nor anyone who thinks logically would defend an opinion which makes the man who pronounces a capital sentence entitled to especial honor, and the man who executes it the basest of the base. I know, however, that argument is powerless against prejudice, and therefore accept the popular estimation of my position as a fact, at the same time that I reject it as an injustice

I confess willingly to as much pride as that, or rather—I mistake my word—to as much self-respect. Even the executioner's son may have that—nay, he must have it or he would be lost.

"I would write no more but that I think I hear you ask: Why, then, expose yourself to the injustice? Why remain in a position against which such an invincible prejudice prevails? Let me try to tell you why.

"In doing so I must go back to a time when I had yet no idea who I was. Up to my twelfth year I received instruction from a good old *abbe*, who thought no shame of teaching the executioner's child. I lived in absolute seclusion; our house having a garden attached to it, I never went into the street except when my mother took me with her to church or, more rarely, for a walk. But on these occasions I saw neglected, ragged children and beggars, to whom my mother allowed me to give alms, and at that time I lived in the belief that I was one of the fortunate of the earth. Surrounded by every comfort and, above all, by the tenderest affection, what could a child want besides? But when the good old man who had charge of my education died, my father, knowing no one who would take his place, formed the hazardous project of sending me to school. There was an excellent institution in our quarter the principal of which was an enlightened, kind-hearted man, who made no objection to receiving me. Of course, both he and my father hoped that my identity would remain unknown, and this seemed possible since the school was at some little distance from our house, and the children who attended it were unlikely to have any thought of the executioner or to be acquainted with his name.

"I went to school, then, and was supremely happy. For I must take back what I said just now—that until I saw you, I had never known what friendship was. Perhaps if I had not walked arm-in-arm with a boy friend, I should not have known how to feel it when you pressed my hand or leaned upon my shoulder. It would have been too late —as would to God it had been.

"The boy who became my inseparable companion lived in the next street to ours and I used to call for him daily and leave him at his door when we returned from school. Once, however, when we had been dismissed earlier than usual, I invited him to go home with me. I had told my mother of him and she had asked if he was a good boy; I wanted her to see what a nice boy he was. I was very proud of my friend. Judge of my dismay, therefore, when he was received with the greatest coldness. I supposed my parents were ill-pleased that I had brought him, especially as, when dinner was put on the table, they did not even ask him to sit down. Poor X—— went away surprised at the reception he had met with and leaving me intensely mortified by it.

"The meal that followed was so silent and constrained that I could remember nothing like it since my grandfather died, and I fell to fancying some one must be dead; perhaps the old man who had been a contemporary of my grandfather and who still came sometimes—our only visitor—to pass an evening with my parents. I have thought since that there really was some one dead, and that was a little happy boy, though he did not yet suspect it.

"After dinner my mother took me aside and told me it was not best to bring my friends home, that grandmother

was old and did not like strange faces about her or company at the table. That was explanation enough for me, and I went to school next day prepared to tell X—— how it happened that he had not been more kindly treated. But he would not speak to me or even look at me, and moreover the other boys were evidently bent on avoiding me. Pride came then to my assistance; if X—— would not speak, neither would I. I endured this state of things for a day or two, but my heart was very sore all the while at my friend's unkindness, and at the more and more openly displayed intention of the boys to slight me, and at last, when I could bear it no longer, I went to X—— in recreation time, made my poor little excuse for my family's inhospitable behavior and told him I was sorry. Still he did not speak! I implored him to say if I had done anything to offend him. He only turned his head away and began to draw on a bit of paper. I grew angry and declared that he *should* speak. He simply finished his drawing and put it in my hand without a word.

"It was a rude sketch of two upright beams with a great knife between them and a man bound to a plank. Underneath was written: *Tuus pater carnifex.*

"I had never seen the guillotine, but I was long past *carnifex* in my Latin and I understood a look of contempt on a childish face. With the paper in my hand I ran through the streets, straight home, never stopping till I sank down at my mother's feet in such a passion of tears and sobs as brought the whole house in alarm. I gave her he crumpled sketch; she smoothed it on her knee and I emember yet her startled look; then she, too, was in ears, heart-broken with compassion.

"When I grew calmer, my father requested my mother

and grandmother to leave me to him, and he told me everything—who we were and how people regarded us. But he said there must be an executioner and our family had furnished that officer of the state since 1688; we must think of that and do our duty, and let people behave to us as they would. And then he said that as he had stood by *his* father, so he hoped that I should stand by him.

"I promised. Little I knew what I was promising, but my childish vanity was flattered to find myself of such importance and my father talking to me as if I were a man. And who knows? Perhaps I felt a pride that our family had furnished that officer of state for so many years! But chiefly, I promised because it was my father, the man whom I loved best and the man who loved me best, who set the case before me, and those are reasons that hold good when one has come to think differently about all the rest.

"So my fate was fixed. I never went back to school. The teacher informed my father that he had talked seriously with the boys and believed I should have no further trouble; but when it was left to me to decide, I instinctively knew that it could not be the same to go back on sufferance and as an object of compassion. Pride and defiance were astir in me, and I continued my education on a plan of my own, in my father's library, among novels and travels and whatever else I was able to devour. I was not miserable; yet I had had a taste of something that I often missed and never could enjoy again; and now, when I went out with my mother, I used to think if people knew who she was they would not be so courteous to her. Everything was changed. It was a turning point in my life. The happy child that I had been was dead.

"But in all this I am not blaming my father. He was right when he said that in Paris or in France the only position open to me was his. For if in spite of every difficulty, he had bred me to the law, would anyone have intrusted his case to the executioner's son? The Parisians would have made a *bonmot* on my pretentions; they would have said, if the son did not succeed with his client the father would, no doubt—it was all in the family. And that would have been the end of my career. Such a plan could only have been carried out if my parents had had me brought up far from them and under another name. And it is not for me to wonder that they could not do that with their only child. One other chance, indeed, might be open to us all; with such private means as we possess, and glad as I should be to do my part toward increasing our resources, if this were necessary, we might make ourselves a place in a new country; but my father is too fixed in his habits and has too little energy for that. The mere thought of it disturbs the repose and equanimity he has cultivated. For he, too, had his season of revolt, as he has told me. Perhaps I shall have mine of resignation or indifference!

"At all events, while my father and mother are left to me, my place is with them. It would be sad, indeed, if, when everyone turns from us, we were not united among ourselves; if, at least, so far as love and duty go, the executioner's family were not like any other.

"I have written an immeasurably long letter and have no right to expect that you will find in it any excuse for the advantage I have taken of your amiable character and kindly disposition. All that I dare to hope is that some little lingering of the friendly sentiments you professed for

the man you thought I was will have enabled you to read it with patience and then—since our ways have parted and we shall never meet again—will help you to forget, without rancor, HENRI SANSON."

I gave this letter to my aunt to read, saying only that it contained something which would shock her. I don't doubt there were things in it that touched her, too, as they had me, in spite of the fact that when she gave it back her chief anxiety seemed to be as to my intentions. She did not reproach me,—the *denouement* was too terrible for that,—but she thought the letter needed no reply and that he expected none. And she earnestly begged me to observe that this was a case for the utmost discretion. For her own part, she must say, she had not come abroad to associate with the hangman, but that was of little consequence; it was my sister who was to be considered. If this story became known she could not be responsible for Fanny's success in society. It was quite true that the Parisians delighted in *bonsmots*, the more malicious the better; and anything ridiculous would be fatal! Besides which, I must be aware that in this adventure there was far more than the ridiculous for us; she was sure I felt all the unseemliness in my sister having been brought, even by chance, into contac with such a personage.

And she was right; I did feel it. Nevertheles

the latter gave me no peace until I sat down and tried to answer it. And that was as difficult a composition as I ever attempted. I could not tell him that his "tacit deception" was of no consequence, and thus imply that he was a fitting acquaintance for Fanny. Besides, there was a complication there —on his part—which it was impossible to think of without indignation. And what was the use of writing if it was only to agree with him that his conduct had been unpardonable? One thing I was thankful for—he had not attempted to even mention the ladies. Indeed, I could not help thinking that in that world of his own which he lived in, he was a man *comme il faut*. Ah, if the matter had been only between him and me, there would have been no difficulty. I could even fancy myself, in that case, going under cover of night to make a mysterious visit at the house of the executioner of Paris!

As it was, I wrote; and trust I wrote in such a way as to give him no pain. All I said was that while he had anticipated some of the sentiments that his letter might call forth, there was one of which he had seemed to feel some doubt, and was the only one of which I cared to assure him. I begged him to believe that he had my heartfelt sympathy, and that though, as he said, our ways had parted, yet I should never forget what I owed him and if, at

any future time, I could do him a service, not in return for his to me but as from one man to another, he would find me ready.

How Fanny might be affected by all this, I did not know until she asked me, the first time we were alone together, if I had answered "that unfortunate man's" letter. "Why, what was there in it to answer?" I said, just to try her. "You might, at least, tell him you are sorry for him!" she exclaimed, indignantly. And then I was glad to say I had told him just that, and still more glad to perceive that she spoke without the least embarrassment. He was simply "that unfortunate man" for her.

But she was anxious to respect him in his misfortune and inquired further whether I thought that picture we had seen was really one of his ancestors. Whereupon I related the story of the little executioner, for I have no doubt that was he. His fond mother probably wanted her young headsman painted in his official dress! And I can even imagine how poor Nasson—for so I still call him—might have written under his copy, in a moment of bitterness, *Le petit Bourreau*, and then effaced it afterward with a sort of pity for the pretty child. If we had had our wits about us, though, we must have reflected that that was no Louis XV. or Louis XIV. costume such as his great-grandfather might have

worn, but a survival from an earlier period—the slashed doublet, the long, red hose, and pointed shoes.

Fanny has had a great success in Paris this past winter, and has been *la jolie Americaine* everywhere. No one of the thousand possible chances has ever brought him before her eyes again. In writing to me they have never mentioned him, and I have been discretion itself. Only now, just lately, the first allusion there has ever been to his existence fluttered out of a letter from my aunt to me. It was a little slip cut from a newspaper and enclosed, without a word of comment, a brief notice of an execution which had taken place in Paris. The concluding paragraph was as follows:

"A notable feature of the occasion was that Monsieur de Paris, prevented by illness from performing his office, was represented by his son and associate, a young man of apparently not much over twenty years of age, who was observed to be as pale as the patient and considerably more agitated."

That was the last—an unlooked-for ending to my strange acquaintance. Will the finer or coarser part of him prevail?

As memory pictures him through all the various circumstances of our intercourse, down to the last

time I saw him, kneeling there in the moonlight, I hope the best.

It is true, he may not be in the least a devout man; that was perhaps only a chance posture of his despair. But I like to think otherwise, and to believe that, for his probably long and certainly lonely life, he has already begun to seek the consolations of religion.

A PAIR OF STRANGE EYES.

LAST spring we were going by the night train from Cologne to Paris—Stockton and I. There were only two ladies in our *coupé;* as it was for non-smokers we felt tolerably safe from an invasion of the male element.

Hardly had I made the above reflection, when someone straggled past, glanced up at our windows, turned back, dumped down his valise and opened the door. I did not feel the more kindly toward him for his being a fellow-countryman as he unmistakably was. Very ugly men are always unmistakably something; ugly and beery, unmistakably German; ugly and hook-nosed, unmistakably French; ugly with a lank, lantern-jawed, cadaverous ugliness, unmistakably American, and that was my man.

In the meanwhile he got in, "located" his *portmanteau*, and let himself slowly down by Stockton's side. So I was the one who would be able to stretch myself out for the night. Perhaps in my selfish

satisfaction I began to look less ferociously at the intruder. I believe, though, it was the way he looked at me that did the business. It was still light and I could see his face distinctly as he pushed his hat back and passed one large hand over his narrow, wrinkled forehead. Pale and thin, with an ill-formed nose, flat, meaningless mouth and great furrows down his hollow cheeks, he would have been ordinary looking to the last degree but for the strangest pair of eyes I ever saw—in such surroundings, I mean. A gentle, wistful, pitiful gaze met my first careless glance, and from that moment my faculties of speculation seemed riveted to our new companion. How had he come by those brown eyes? What did the look mean that they gave his otherwise expressionless face? Who and what was he? Not a traveler for pleasure—there was not the smallest look of that. And what business could have brought a man of his stamp so far from his native shores? If it was business it was not prospering, for he looked poor; his clothes were shabby; shawl or rug he had none, and even his valise wore no respectably battered air, but had evidently been a cheap article from the first.

After that one glance, my *vis-à-vis* laid his heac back on the cushions and fixed his pensive gaze or the landscape that faded in the gathering twilight.

Our ladies—Germans—then proceeded to make

their arrangements for the night. That is, they took off their bonnets, wound their heads up in woolen comforters and requested to have our window shut. The day had been warm and the evening coolness was by no means unpleasant, especially compared with the alternative of stifling. Stockton and I were both slow in understanding the ladies' wishes, but our companion shamed us, stretching out his gaunt arm with that traditional obedience of the American to the fairer sex, and then sinking back in his place again, as oblivious of thanks as if he had been a paid servant and did not expect any. It grew darker and darker outside, and stuffier in, until the muffled heads sought and found repose; then I aided and abetted my friend in his nefarious design of letting the window down.

"It's going to be cold," Stockton said, as we spread out our rugs, and I saw his neighbor draw the thin, snuff-colored coat together over his knees.

"You will feel the air too much, perhaps. We might have it up a little further," said I. Why in the world I should have been more willing to oblige him than the ladies I can't tell: but so it was.

"Don't mind it," came from the obscurity of his corner. The voice had a decidedly uneducated twang, and yet there was something plaintive in the wearily drawled words that corresponded to those strange

eyes and made one suspect a sort of refinement in the man, after all. Certainly there was something sympathetic about him from the very first. I know we both urged him to take our extra shawls as if our happiness depended on it.

"Shall be robbing you," he protested, gently.

It was a peculiarity that he dropped the use of pronouns as far as possible, speaking altogether as if it were hardly worth while to make the exertion. An actor or a would-be *blasé* man of fashion who could have imitated him would have been "made."

"Queer," I could not help saying to myself again. "What can have set him traveling in Europe?"

Upon that I fell asleep, but felt him once laying my wraps over me with a cautious hand when they slipped down, and as I woke it seemed he was touching me.

"Got to get out," he sighed.

We got out accordingly. The train moved off to let the other come up, and a man began a refrain of which we caught "*visiter les bagages*," and were for starting after the other people when our companion checked us.

"Only passengers for Ostend."

"You seem to know this road."

"Been over it before," he returned, with melancholy indifference.

"He can't be the Wandering Jew, can he?" said

Stockton. He could n't be a courier either, as I had half begun to suspect, for he said the place was Vurvurs, which we afterward discovered to mean Verviers.

Of the night I have no further recollection than that we tumbled into the train and recomposed ourselves to slumber, but in the dim light of morning I saw our compatriot's patient, weary face again. He looked as if he had not closed an eye.

"You haven't slept?"

"Never do, travelin'."

"Have you traveled much?"

"C'nsid'rable." How long that drawl made the word, in spite of the clipped syllables!

"Got friends in Paris?" he inquired, speaking for the first time of his own accord. And when I said yes, he added, plaintively:

"Great city."

Yes, a great city for a lonely man like that who had no friends there. Stockton said something about perhaps we should meet, and I seconded him, though I declare our new acquaintance was not just the sort of figure we were in the habit of being seen with.

The next step, and the one that set him talking at last, was the sharing our bread and salt. "Ain't got more'n enough for yourselves," he suggested, but at our renewed instance finally took a roll in

one hand and chicken-bone in the other, and, giving alternate bites at each, looked thoughtfully at the poplars that went skimming by the windows.

Without vanity, it was perhaps a good while since he had been in as agreeable company. To him, a solitary wanderer far from home, the chance of meeting two young countrymen who were socially inclined might well not happen every day. We felt that it was so, and felt, too, the pleasant consciousness of showing our best side to a fellow creature.

He asked, I think, whether we had seen American papers lately. I said they were full of a famous case then trying in New York, and Stockton hoped the hero of it would get a good dose of state prison.

He looked at us strangely.

"Ever been there?" he asked, with the faintest shadow of a smile on his thin lips. "Knew of a man sent to state prison for nothing once. Don't wish it to anybody since."

"Why, how was that?"

It took a certain amount of questioning to get him started but he did tell us eventually a most remarkable story. To give it again in his words would be impossible; they were very few and he made long pauses when his brown eyes seemed to be seeing the "little house" and the "young wife" and all the rest of it, so I only try to repeat what he

said in my own way, with the impression it left on me at the time.

Twenty years ago a young couple lived not far from a new town in one of the Western states. They were poor; they had a little house and a few acres of land—not quite paid for—and the man did the most of the farm-work with his own hands, only hiring help now and then when it was absolutely indispensable. The young wife did her part bravely, and besides themselves they had only one little soul to provide for, so they were "gittin' on." They were happy, I should imagine. It was here our narrator made his longest pause as if he liked to see them so.

One winter night—it was a fearful winter; no snow, but a biting cold and furious winds all the time—one night the wife waked her husband and said the baby was ailing. They were inexperienced, both of them, but they knew enough to see the child was "pretty bad," and the first thought was naturally the doctor. It was a long way to run to the town, but there could be no help this side of it, for the only neighbors they had were unneighborly ones. That is, there had been a quarrel in which money was involved, the poorer man had come off worst, and since then he had had no words, either good or bad, with his fortunate rival.

He set off then, leaving the young mother with the

sick child. He ran as people can when life depends on it, until a flash of recollection well-nigh took all his strength away. The doctor was not there! He had seen him himself, at the station, starting off and saying he should not be back till to-morrow. It had slipped his memory utterly until that moment when he stood, at midnight, irresolute on the road. What was to be done? Who else had he any right to call upon? Some compassionate soul would have turned out, in that awful night, to help him, doubtless, but it was a long way to go for any one but the doctor. And the neighbor's house was there right before him! Their women-folk would surely know something. For his wife's sake, poor girl, and for the child's he thought he could do it.

To go round by the road was to lose time; he dropped over the fence and passed by the barn. Light showed through the cracks: then there was someone up! The next moment a shutter flew open and "Fire! fire!" rang out in frantic accents.

Well, there was no help to be looked for there. With that wind blowing, they needed all the hands there were to save anything; he would have lent his willingly but didn't his own child come first? There seemed to be nothing for it now but to go home again; he couldn't leave his wife longer alone with the dying baby.

However, it turned out to be not so bad as that.

The child was already better, and, making sure there was nothing more to fear, he went back to offer the aid he had meant to ask.

Now you know the rest of it, just as we did when he got as far as that. There wasn't a thing saved, house and barn and everything went, and the man he was telling about was, of course, the one who had set the fire. He had been seen running away; he had been recognized by the hired man who gave the alarm. That complication with the doctor was a stupid invention; the doctor had told him himself he was going out of town. In fact, it was all nonsense about the child; it was as well as could be and had never had the croup before that anybody knew of. And the man's wife took his part, as what wife wouldn't? The whole matter lay in a nutshell. He had had a quarrel with his neighbor, had lost, had been heard to say all sorts of things about him, and finally had tried to revenge himself. It was perfectly plain!

"Respectable folk call those things perfectly plain sometimes. S'pose they mean they'd a done the same," he said, with another strange look at us.

"And did he really get state prison?"

"Twelve years."

"And what became of his wife and child?"

"She couldn't run the farm, sold it, and what was left after paying the debt on'y kept her alive four

years. Was n't strong enough to work in anybody's house but her own. Baby died that same year of the fire."

"Well," said Stockton, feeling, I suppose, as I did, rather indignant with somebody, "I do n't see why people can't believe a straight story when they hear it."

"Pretty hard to tell a straight story sometimes. A man thinks he knows what the questions are aiming at, and tries to be as cunning as the lawyers."

"Ah, that he ought never to do!"

"Drowning man 'll catch hold a something an' cling onto it when he might a been saved if he'd on'y let go."

He leaned back, pushed up his hat, and rubbed his forehead, as if he had done for one while.

I asked him who he supposed set the fire.

"Nobody, p'r'aps. Careless with the lantern, or the hired man 'd been smoking."

"But he must have said so."

"Well, no. 'Taint a very pleasant thing to say."

We could neither of us help yielding to the suspicion that he was telling his own story. That would explain those wistful eyes; they had looked for twelve years through prison bars; and yet it seemed preposterous. It was too great a shame to be true,

anyway. It was something he had got out of the newspaper.

"And what became of the man?"

"Came out." A long, long pause. "Never amounted to much afterward."

When I expressed a strong opinion on the subject of such mistaken justice, I could not see that he appeared greatly to care what I thought. But then, perhaps, a man who had been through such an experience as that would n't be particularly grateful if people said it was a pity ten years after. It would be rather late then! At all events, I could ask no more questions; he had plainly said all he cared to, so I can never affirm with positive certainty whether he had been that poor young man or not; but this I know, if he was, he neither seemed to expend much sympathy on himself nor to require it from others. Indeed, he rather had it to spare.

"Feel sick?" he asked, looking at Stockton. And then I first noticed how pale he was. I should not have thought much of that after a night in the train, but we had just come from Munich. Every one had advised us not to go and we had said we must see those pictures, and were not afraid of the cholera. Now we all thought of it—our companion, too, for he knew where we had been.

"Any pain?" he inquired, after a while, touching

Stockton's waistcoat significantly. My poor friend admitted that he had a little.

"Better take something hot and go to bed." As we were just getting into Paris it was a sensible bit of advice.

Somehow with that uneasy notion on our minds, we let him leave us without any parting words. He sighed "Good-day," and disappeared, while we were hauling out our traps.

When I came back from having the trunks examined, I found Stockton looking a great deal worse, he was pale as death, and feeling all over himself distractedly to find something.

"My money's gone!" he gasped.

"No!"

"It is! I had it in the train—I took it out to see if my passport was there."

With one accord we looked round the waiting room, but our compatriot had walked through the custom-house with his little valise, and gone long ago. It is scarcely necessary to add that we thought no more of the cholera that day.

Stockton vows and declares nobody else came near him, and mentions the melancholy man's punching him in the stomach at the last moment, as proof positive. He calls the story he told us "bosh," or says if there was any truth in it our friend only got what he deserved. More likely, however, he had

been engaged in pettier rascalities, until his acquaintance with the police grew troublesomely extensive, then he came over to London, whence he makes little predatory excursions on the continent, like his light-fingered English cousins. He had been to the annual fair in Leipsic when we met him and had had no luck; that's why he looked so seedy.

Now *I* say our first impressions may have been correct; perhaps society had done him that immeasurable injury and when he "came out," poor fellow, not "amounting to much," he may have thought the only way to square accounts was to set about earning those twelve years as fast as possible. However, why suppose anything of the kind? Why may not he have told that tale as 'twas told to him? What prevents his being what he looked like, on the whole—a dyspeptic invalid, traveling from Dan to Beersheba in search of a lost digestion? How do we know but he has millions, owns a petroleum well somewhere, and his shabby coat is only an eccentricity? There is no use in taking away a man's character on an uncertainty. I might declare he was feeling of my pockets in the night when I thought he was kindly covering me up, and that, finding I wore my money in a belt, he let me alone thereafter. But I shall not say anything of the kind. Invalid or rogue, he was no enviably happy man,

and—though it might be different had the loss been mine—if I met him to-morrow and he looked at me in that odd sort of way with those strange brown eyes, I could n't make myself disagreeable. At most, I might ask:

"You did n't get hold of anything of ours by mistake in the train, did you?"

I fancy I hear him saying, sympathetically:

"Miss anything?"

CARITÀ.

EASTER was drawing on, and Rome was in all the glow of spring. From a balcony in the Piazza di Spagna, two ladies looked down on the kaleidoscope-like movement in the square; there were perambulating fashion-plates in Gainsborough hats, girls in Roman costume, resplendent officers coming out of Nazzari's and wiping their mustaches, brown-cloaked monks shambling in the shade of the houses, boys with oranges—with violets—with matches—with blossoming almond branches, and at the far end of the piazza, sallying from the dark portals of the Propaganda, clerical boys, Seminarists, setting off in file for a walk, their scarlet cassocks flying with their youthful, vigorous strides; and finally, adding to all the other confusion, there were the carriages drawn up for hire, that, at the first glimpse of a red-covered guide-book, broke ranks and dashed out by the half-dozen to circle around the *forestieri*.

Of the two ladies surveying this scene, one was young and pretty, the other pretty and old. The

golden locks were adorned by a flaming satin bow, the silver hair was arranged in shining rolls under exquisite lace, and altogether, as they sat there beneath the awning, with a little table and dainty tea-service between them, they themselves made an interesting picture.

Suddenly in the dimness of the drawing-room behind them a voice said:

"Rosalia, signora!"

"Rosalia? Well, she may come here, Antonio."

And she came,—at the first glance, a poor little specimen of humanity, though at the second might be found some portion of that *beauté du diable* which for the French means the fleeting charm of freshness that even plain-featured girls may have for a season. She was very small, not looking her fifteen years, and painfully thin, but her eyés were bright, her hair grew prettily around her forehead, and there was a faint tinge of pink in her cheeks, as if youth were ready to assert itself could it but get a chance in that half-starved little body.

She brought some work which her mistress had done for the ladies, and while they expressed satisfaction, asked kindly questions, and tried to be encouraging, a bashful smile, or "Si, signora," and "No, signora," just above her breath, were all that could be obtained from her.

"The other things must be finished soon," said the

old lady at last. "You know we go away after Easter."

"Si, signora."

"And how about your going with us, Rosalia?"

This time she clasped her hands, and a pathetic "Oh, signora!" conveyed intense longing.

"Poor little soul, how she would like it!" exclaimed the young lady. They could say what they pleased in English, Rosalia understood not a syllable. "What can that uncle of hers be thinking of? Does he suppose we shall eat her? We should have to fatten her first. It is my belief the child has never had a good meal in her life."

"Of course she hasn't," returned the grandmother. "But as to her uncle's objections, it is plain enough what they are; he is a priest and we are heretics. However, if he came here we might possibly understand each other. I could assure him I haven't the slightest intention of meddling with her faith, and I suppose he would see for himself that her temporal welfare would be furthered. You say your uncle is recovering, Rosalia; when will he be out of the hospital?"

"Soon, signora."

"Then you must ask him to come and see me. I think perhaps he may yet agree to your being my little maid, if I tell him how much I want you," she

added smilingly, "and that you will come back to Rome with me every winter."

The color rose in the girl's eager face, and her eyes sparkled. "Oh, signora, if he would only consent!" she cried, almost forgetting her shyness.

"Nice child," said the old lady approvingly. It is always pleasant to feel one's benevolent intentions properly appreciated, and then she had really taken a fancy to the girl; it had occurred to her at once that Rosalia might fill the place of a maid who had just left her. "The creature has n't the first idea of neatness or order, probably," she observed to her granddaughter, "but I could teach her; she looks as if she would learn. Her being but fifteen is an advantage. When Edward takes you away, I shall still have a young face about me. And she will not be for marrying directly like that thankless Lucy. She must stay with me ten years at least; then she shall have a dowry and settle comfortably."

So it was all satisfactorily arranged, if only that priest had not made difficulties.

"Ah, if uncle would but consent!" Rosalia repeated to herself, as she chose the longest way home, and even sat down on the steps of the Fontana di Trevi to eat some cake which the signorina had given her from the pretty tea-table, with the remark, "She shall have two pieces; for I dare say

she would like to take one to the old thing she lives with." Rosalia had not understood that observation; but, if she had, the "old thing" would have got no cake. Not that the girl was greedy, but she knew the padrona, who would have accepted the offering—without so much as *grazie*—and consumed it, while the only real enjoyment in it would have come afterward, when, with a cunning smile on her thin lips, she would have said, "Now they should n't need any supper."

Rosalia was rather simple for her years, but she knew the padrona through and through. And when a miserly, ill-tempered old woman takes a child to her bosom to feed and clothe and treat her like a daughter and consider herself repaid by filial services for this lavish sharing of her poverty with the orphan, is there need for us to go into minutiæ to get a clear idea of the situation? There was only one saving circumstance in it: the priest who just now stood between Rosalia and good fortune had always stood, too, like a bulwark between her and the extremest consequences of the padrona's tender mercy. To that wretched old woman he seemed like a person of condition, although in fact he was far poorer than herself, and when he came to her attic dwelling she cringed before him in sweetness that became her worse than all her frowns. She lived in salutary fear of Rosalia's appealing to her

uncle. It was less the shabby cassock that awed her, however, than a grave, sweet way its wearer had of talking about "the child" as if he thought the padrona really shared his solicitude for Rosalia's welfare, and when he had exhausted that topic, which to him represented all temporal concerns, he was as likely as not to enter on the abstract subject of another life, advising the padrona to fix her mind constantly upon it, for all the world as if she, *poveretta!* had not enough to do in this present existence to scrape coppers together and hide them in a mattress. He frightened her, the thin, hollow-eyed man. He gave her, too, a distinct impression that he was condescending when he waived her compliments and took the rickety chair she wiped for him.

Yet, in spite of his apparent superiority to sordid surroundings, he was used to them. He knew nothing else. Born in poverty, it was only through the ambition of his parents, and miracles of self-sacrifice on their part, that our priest had ever attained the sacerdotal dignity, and then, unhappily, no further miracles were wrought in his behalf. He had not distinguished himself in the seminary, he was not of the sort to be singled out and pushed forward for the credit of the church at large; and, with neither money nor patronage to make up for the want of talent, he was naturally counted with

the riff-raff that remains to be provided for in one way or another when the brilliant situations are filled and even the poorest little country parishes have all been given away. The provision made in his case was of the smallest,—a daily mass to be said in an obscure church, for which he received just a sufficient number of *soldi* to keep body and soul together. That was as much as his superiors felt justified in doing for an absurdly timid and very commonplace youth who would evidently never amount to anything.

And he was grateful for that crumb of ecclesiastical bounty. No one could have a meaner opinion of him than he entertained of himself; he was ready to take the lowest place, though he magnified it, too, after a fashion. A simple, devout soul, he reverenced his office, and if his especial duty was merely one of those floating masses which serve as alms for the needy clergy, yet while he performed it he felt himself endowed with all the rights of the parish priest. As he put on the consecrated vestments, the shamefacedness of poverty fell away from him, and had royalty itself condescended to so poor a little sanctuary, the minister of the King of kings would still have uttered from the altar unabashed his salutation, "The Lord be with you!" The padrona was right, there was a certain distinction about him; nothing that he was aware of,

however; it was simply that sort of prestige which belongs to the foreigner; his daily walk was, as it had ever been, in the midst of squalor, only he lived elsewhere; there where "the sparrow hath found her an house, and the swallow a nest," he, flitting to and fro in his sacred calling, as destitute of this world's goods as they, was at home, like them.

One can imagine how a single-minded man of that description, devoted to a system embodying for him all that was beautiful in this life and all hope of happiness in the next, would look at his niece's proposal to take up her portion with the heretics. To him it was nothing more nor less than that. He did not believe that the heretics had put up a certain aggressive-looking building, all red and white stripes, in the Via Nazionale, solely for their own edification. Under the auspices of the "Sardinian monarchy" they had, at last, obtained a foothold in the sacred city; the next thing would be to enlarge their borders, to gather in the young and simple and unwary. Nay, they were doing it already. In the *campanile*—the only pretty part of the heretical structure, to his thinking—there were bells that jangled melodies on Sundays and feast-days, and idle passers gaped into the air to see where the shower of joyous music came from, then lingered to watch the well-dressed folk going into their strange sanctuary, until finally, persuaded by the

false brazen tongues and yielding to overpowering curiosity, they slipped in after. It was an American church, but then any *yes*-speaking people might attend it, and of course Rosalia's Inglese would take her there. It was of no use for the girl to tell him they were "so good and kind and gentle;" he was aware they might be all that, even though they worshiped in that striped temple,—and, poor things! if they knew no better, he would grant they were not to blame,—but for her, a daughter of the true Church, to throw herself deliberately in the way of being perverted was quite another matter, and one on which their goodness and kindness had no sort of bearing. The circumstance that he himself felt the offer a temptation put him only the more on his guard. The Inglese were rich, Rosalia would be well fed, well clothed, well paid; she could lay up money as a dowry to begin life with if she married, or as a provision for later years if she did not. And what were her prospects with the padrona? The understanding was simply that she was to have a home, and that the old woman should teach her all she knew and take the child's services in return, which latter part of the contract had been so faithfully carried out that Rosalia did nearly the whole of the sewing by which her mistress earned a living and added to her hidden stores. That had been the best the poor priest could do for his little orphan

niece, the only relative he had left in the world, and on whom he expended a truly tender affection; that had been the best he could do at first, when her parents died and left her destitute; but it was not the sort of arrangement that ought to be permanent, and still, as time went on, he saw no means of doing better for her. What he would have liked was some place in a family of her own faith and nation, even though it were far from being so brilliant a situation as this with the *forestieri;* only, young and small as she was, and all but in rags, who would think, to look at her, that poor little Rosalia was worth anything more than her "keep"? He saw that, even while he felt sure the child would do herself credit if she got a chance. A pity it was only the English who could afford to take fancies!

While he was still in the difficulties of decision, and more moved by Rosalia's entreaties and his own longing for her temporal welfare than he dared let her see, he was, one day, run over by a carriage, and taken to the hospital with various broken bones.

Rosalia adored her uncle, and could not conceive of doing anything that he disapproved, only she hoped he might be brought to approve of such a glorious outlook for her future. All the way home she was thinking what she could say to persuade him, and when, arrived at the top of the five steep

flights of stairs, she opened the door of the disorderly kitchen and found the padrona had gone out, she was delighted to have the place to herself and continue her reflections a little longer. First, however, she peeped into the yet more disorderly bedroom, to make sure she really was alone, then examined the work laid ready for her, tossed it back on the table, and stepped out on the tiny balcony, which was the only part of the padrona's dwelling in the least to Rosalia's mind; it was from thence, by an ingenious arrangement of bucket, rope and pulley that water was obtained from the well in the court below, and nothing pleased Rosalia better, of all her domestic avocations, than this drawing of water. Imagine, for instance, that some of the neighbors in the three other lofty, dingy houses that backed on the court came out on their balconies at the same time with her—it became quite social at once; she, as a child, did not join in the calling back and forth, the lively observations and compliments of the day that were sure to be exchanged from house to house during the water-drawing process, but she took care to be deliberate enough in her movements to get the full benefit of it all. And even if stillness reigned and the place seemed dead when she sent her bucket down with a splash into the stone-bordered basin, something might easily happen before she got it up again; a man came into the

court, perhaps, and a girl put her head out of a window, and then what joyous salutations and gay chatter!—the young mason, bepowdered from his work, looking up with flashing eyes and showing all his white teeth, and his inamorata, conscious of disorder in her array, holding herself together at the throat with one hand and settling her hair with the other, but nothing embarrassed, and readily promising to meet him on Sunday, for the interview ended with, "*Domenica, allora!*"—"*Si, domenica!*" and "*Addio!*"—"*A rivederci!*" Then hardly had the young man turned away and the girl disappeared, before he was back with a little, shrill whistle,—he had forgotten something,—and she beamed out on him once more, and they went through it all again, down to "*Domenica*" and the prolonged farewells.

Or, at another time and another window, a woman leaned out over a parcel of children who were flying bits of paper as improvised kites, and, as she withdrew, laid her hand on one of the curly heads and pulled it back for a kiss, as if no opportunity of bestowing caresses ought to be wasted. One can fancy the orphan looking on at that, resting her bucket on the rail of the balcony, quite lost to what she was about! No danger but that she would be recalled to it soon enough by the padrona's squalling "Rosalia!" in a way to make her start

and slop the water into her shoe, as she lifted it down and tugged it into the kitchen, there to be asked if she had drawn the fountain dry,—an ancient joke, of the sort that is meant for only one to laugh at.

On the afternoon in question, however, Rosalia had no attention to give to the neighbors; she wanted to get out of the gloomy kitchen, and to her lofty little perch in mid-air, with the spring breezes frolicking around her, and the blue overhead, only to pursue her reflections and dream of joys that might be hers. It would be happiness, she thought, just to walk about the grand apartments of her English ladies, with their softly-carpeted floors and magnificence of satin and gilding. What a palace! What glory to occupy even a modest nook there! She saw herself tripping around, prettily dressed,—for they would not want her looking *so!*—zealous in her attendance on the lovely ladies, ready to do everything they told her in their kind, sweet tones. And then the idea of going with them far away!—to come back again, however; she was glad of that. She should not lose sight of uncle; and when they were in foreign lands, Antonio, the old servant, who smiled at her always now so pleasantly, would doubtless be a sort of father to her.

After she had it all so beautifully pictured, she

merely stood there, swaying to and fro as she held by the iron rod where the rope and pulley hung, her head back, gazing into the glorious Italian sky, watching the birds that darted across above the narrow court, quite rapt in the blissful fancy that, because the world was wide and the years long, beautiful things must be somewhere in store for her. Silly child! never thinking of her neglected work and that the padrona might come upon her unawares!

The fact was, the old woman was stumping up the stairs that very moment in a tremendous fury. She had gone to buy a handful of charcoal, and had quarrelled with the dealer from whom she usually supplied herself. She had a way, after the charcoal was measured out, of tossing in another bit which she had picked from the sack meanwhile and held until it might appear that she had forgotten where it came from. The dealer perceived her little trick, and soon began to take account of it in serving her, whereupon she again noted his counter-stratagem, felt herself defrauded of her extra, and was always on the watch to make it good. She thought she had her chance that afternoon; his head was turned; she put her crooked fingers in the sack and softly laid *two* pieces on her little heap. But he had seen her! He jerked them out again like lightning, and confronted her in righteous indignation. Then

the flood-gates of wrath were opened on either side. The shop was exposed to the street without door or windows, and a crowd of interested listeners soon collected, to whom the combatants constantly appealed. The old woman smote her breast, styling herself a wretched little widow, and swearing to the by-standers that this grinder of the face of the poor had filched away some of her charcoal after he had measured it; she called heaven and earth to witness, and wished she might drop dead if it were not so; while he, purple with rage and the effort to roar her down, declared he had been preyed upon by this old harpy—this thief who stole everything her hands could reach—until it was a miracle he had a roof over his head; all this interspersed from time to time with appropriate apostrophe, when they turned to each other with glowing eyes, spitting out their abuse like angry cats. The culminating moment came when the man caught up the paper of charcoal and emptied it back into the sack; that, in itself, was as good as saying that the whole matter was *vidé*. She might be gone, with the assurance that he would never again sell her the worth of half a farthing!

The contest lost its interest thereafter; the by-standers took that act of inspiration as a sign that they too might go their ways; only the padrona could not make up her mind to quit the

field, and railed still, with the occasional satisfaction of stinging her adversary out of the contemptuous silence he strove to maintain, and causing him to cast some opprobrious epithet in her teeth.

But that could not go on forever; fresh customers appeared, and the old woman, muttering and mumbling, betook herself to another shop where she had not even the chance to exercise her discretion on the weights and measures. No wonder she arrived at home in a tempestuous frame of mind. As she laid her hand on the latch of the door, however, a thought occurred to her that made her lift it very softly, and a gleam of triumphant satisfaction stole over her thousand wrinkles when she found the room empty. It would have been an actual disappointment to see Rosalia bending over her sewing. "Just wait!" she murmured, as she put her parcel down,—which injunction might have been addressed as well to her own trembling passion as to the unconscious girl on whom she proposed to visit it. The next moment Rosalia was dashed out of paradise by a blow on the side of her head that nearly knocked her senseless.

No doubt that sort of thing might have a calming effect on the active party, the perturbation of the system being relieved by a flash and a thunderclap; only there is that pale, wide-eyed, astounded fellow-creature, for the use of whom as a conductor

one must necessarily proceed to justify one's self; and, as raging accusations are, under certain circumstances, the only possible form of self vindication, the padrona was soon foaming at the mouth once more.

Rosalia crept to her chair in silence and sewed violently, for very agitation, through all the storm; but no one need suppose she was overwhelmed by a sense of her shortcomings, or that she believed in the padrona's right to deal heavy-handed justice. She was merely a child, but children younger than she look daily on at the fury of their elders and pronounce, in their innocence, a judgment that may be found confirmed when the books are opened. Rosalia, for her part, was simply thinking that this was the most horrible old woman in the whole world. Why she should also have thought that by going without her supper she might bring home to the old person some sense of her horridness, it would be difficult to say. Therein, at all events, she was vastly mistaken. When the padrona felt that noise enough had been made properly to account for the assault and battery, she subsided, and went to the cupboard for some bread and cheese, of which she ate the larger part and left the rest for Rosalia. She was not surprised if the girl hesitated to approach her offended majesty, but when the coast was clear and Rosalia still sewed on, taking no

notice, it dawned upon the old woman that she was "sulking" and did not mean to eat. Then, instead of being conscience-stricken, she was only afraid Rosalia might change her mind, and so pounced immediately upon the victuals and locked them up, saying viciously, as she did so, "If people don't want their supper, they need n't eat it; it's nothing to me." Only it was something to her—it was compensation for not getting that bit of charcoal.

So Rosalia's heroism simply resulted in her being very hungry by the time she crept into bed and disposed herself in the scant space which the padrona left her next the wall. Cake does not stay long by a growing girl, particularly if her dinner has been of the lightest. However, hunger was nothing in comparison to her outraged feelings and the thought of her airy castles in the dust. That was a terrible ruin. From the heights of glowing anticipation she plunged into the depths of gloomiest foreboding. There was no escape for her from this dreadful existence; she was and should remain a wretched, wretched, *wretched* girl! Fortunately, the padrona was a heavy sleeper, and Rosalia could indulge unmolested in the luxury of woe. She liked to feel herself dissolving, as it were, in tears, and going into paroxysms of misery,—although even such comfort was destined to be short, for she was no sooner fairly aware of satis-

faction in being able to weep so much than the fountain ran dry. A certain curiosity induced her then to examine her pillow, which was not half so wet as she had expected it to be, and directly after that she breathed a little sigh and was asleep.

The next day, as the two sat at their sewing, there came a knock at the door which made Rosalia's heart leap for joy. The padrona's heart leaped also, as the priest entered with a courteous "*E permesso?*" but her sentiments were of a different sort. Though she knew as yet nothing of Rosalia's plans, she felt that the priest would take her slave away if he suspected ill treatment, and so, what with the girl's rapturous exclamations on the one side, and the padrona's voluble account of the late domestic infelicities, as viewed from her stand-point, on the other, the poor man seemed fairly dazed. He looked terribly white and emaciated, being in fact only just sufficiently patched up to have been turned out of the hospital that morning in order to make room for some one else. He raised his hand in gentle deprecation, as if the old woman's gabbling were too much for him. He was sorry there had been trouble; he was sure if the child were in fault that she was sorry too; and would the padrona allow her to go out with him for a while?

That was a question he invariably asked, and which she felt obliged to answer in the affirmative,

little as she liked Rosalia's escaping from her work for half an hour; that day, of course, she liked it less than usual, knowing that they would no sooner be in the street than he would get rather a different version from hers of the late falling out.

And so he did, but somehow, it did not seem to Rosalia that he took a proper interest in the story of her wrongs; it was almost as if he were thinking of something else while she described her utter wretchedness and implored him at least to go and see the English ladies.

"I have had a blow," he said, at last, in explanation of his strange demeanor, "I am not quite myself."

"What! again?" cried Rosalia, all compassion. "And you just out of the hospital! Oh, poor uncle!"

"Little ninny!" he answered, smiling faintly. And she perceived it was not a knock on the head he meant,—like hers of the night before, for instance,—but some disappointment that had come to him. He would give no account of it, however; it would be all right in a few days, he said. And then, promising to think over her affairs, and even to see the English ladies and let her know his final decision as soon as possible, he left her.

What had happened to him was a very extraordinary thing. He had gone that morning straight

from the hospital to the accustomed church where he said mass, and there had found, in the sacristy, a dark, bristly, truculent-looking individual, who was hustling on the vestments *he* always wore, in the evident intention of performing *his* duty.

"Why are you here?" asked our priest in amazement.

"Why are *you* here?" retorted the other, so confidently that the poor man began to look about him, as if perhaps, after all, he had got into the wrong place. But no!

"I have said this mass for sixteen years," he quavered in agitation.

"And I've said it for six weeks," responded the truculent one, hunching his broad shoulders to settle his garments. Then, signing to a diminutive acolyte to follow him, he stalked majestically away.

The boy had been used to serve the mass for our poor priest, and now, as he minced after the new incumbent, waggling his small skirt in ridiculous imitation and turning on the door-sill to run out his tongue, he probably intended to convey that he was not imposed upon by grand airs, and that his sympathies were on the right side.

Well, here was a blow indeed. It was perfectly natural, too, that his mass should have been assigned to some one else while he was ill, only he had never thought of that. He had a scatter-

brained way of never thinking of the most obvious things. All he could do now was to go to the powers that be and see if he might get it back again; but first he went into church and assisted at his rival's triumph. He had expected to give thanks there, at the altar, for his recovery; when he was disappointed of that, he knelt meekly on the broken pavement in the obscurity of the nave. All the light at that early hour fell in the chancel; the first sunbeam striking from a side-window filled it as with a glory, and between his prayers, as he watched the priest kneeling and rising and kneeling again he would draw his hand across his eyes. It was an odd sort of thanksgiving.

But he was to feel even more distinctly that his place was filled and he had better not have come back again. The Roman Catholic Church passes for immensely wealthy, of course, and yet, like some private individuals who dazzle the public, she may be put to it in the bosom of her great family to make both ends meet, so that when one and another of her brood drop off it is, on the principle of the survival of the fittest, the better for her and them. Our priest was an unwelcome apparition in the haunts of men; they had thought he was as good as done with when he was carried off to the hospital.

And he, poor-spirited creature, almost begged

pardon for not having died, so keenly did he feel the being a nuisance. He humbled himself in the dust, and said "*Eccelenza*" and "*Monsignore*" to a mere nobody who was doing great folk's business. Naturally, he got pushed to the wall. What was a little tremulous petition like his in the midst of more ambitious claims? And when he tried to show that to him, at any rate, it was an important matter, seeing he had not a penny to buy bread, he was stopped off at once; no such details as that were wanted. Had he relatives? he was imperiously asked. Yes, he had a niece. Very well, then; he must get assistance there! And possibly something might be found for him next week; he could come again then.

He was so dumfounded by the assumption of Rosalia's being a person of means that he never said a word. He just did what was expected of him, and went away, yet knowing all the while that he was making a dreadful mistake and that he ought to explain. But he absolutely could not do it. The man was only able to stand upright before his Maker; he cowered and trembled in the presence of creatures like himself; it might have been worse the other way, certainly, but he was in a terrible dilemma for all that. When he met with the accident, some rascal, in pretending to assist him, had picked his pocket of the two or three pence he

possessed; so he came out of the hospital without the means to procure a mouthful of food. Had he got the few *soldi* for his mass it would have been all right; his lodging was still open to him, and, having been hitherto exact, he would not have been pressed to pay at once, and by dint of other than canonical fasts he might, some time, have got financially straight again. But, as things now stood, he was looking starvation in the face; in fact, he was pretty well starved already; he had refused his breakfast at the hospital because he must say mass fasting, and, only half recovered as he was, he needed food more than if he had been stronger. Still, he made up his mind to do without it that day, hoping that the next he should find courage to go back and set forth his needs there where he felt they ought to be relieved. He could not endure the thought of asking elsewhere; he was no beggar! What the Church gave him he need not consider alms. In short, he managed to combine with his exaggerated humility a pride that was perhaps equally foolish for one in his condition.

So, faint and sick and heart-broken, he had gone to Rosalia, and it was a little balm to his wounded spirit that there was one person, at least, who need not wish he were dead and out of the way. She, poor girl, little dreamed he had been sent to her to be taken care of; but, had she known, she would

have done her best for him, even to demanding, in his behalf, her supper of the night before; though he would not for the world have had her do it, instinctively feeling that if the padrona knew him to be in want it would be the worse for Rosalia. And there he was right; his prestige would have been irrevocably lost, and whatever the old woman had given him she would have got out of the girl in one way or another.

As he wandered about that day, he could not reflect much upon Rosalia's prospects,—he was too weak for that; still less, as he sat on the steps of a church in the Forum, the one which bears yet on its outer portico the inscription, "To the divine Antoninus and the divine Faustina," did he give even a thought to that strange intermingling of pagan and Christian Rome; he was watching some laborers employed on the excavations and who were then eating their noon-day meal close by. They would have given him a bit of bread, no doubt, and he was almost tempted to ask it from those sons of toil, only that he knew how much they needed all they had. But he fell to thinking there, for the first time in his life, whether it was a pity that he was not as they,—that he could not dig, since to beg he was ashamed.

Of course it might be called a pity, for in his best estate he did not amount to much as he was; and

yet his parents were not entirely astray when they supposed the gentle, thoughtful boy who seemed to have come by mistake into their rude existence must needs have the making of a priest in him. Certain conditions granted, he might have been a perfect parish priest. He perhaps had hit on those conditions himself in the one ambition, or rather longing, of his life. He could spend hours dreaming that he was the shepherd of a simple flock away among the blue Apennines that bounded his horizon; somewhere on those calm heights there was a little church that in his fancy gleamed in the mysterious stillness of the dawn or stood transfigured in the evening glow, while around it clustered the lowly homes of his spiritual family. And who shall say that to such poor, dull folk our priest might not have gone like one of those "whose feet are beautiful upon the mountains," bearing good tidings? The simple faith and child-like reverence of his meek soul would have been his sermons, and as he went in and out among his people, sharing their joys and sorrows and pointing them ever upward from their grinding toil, he might so have found the way into their hearts when his work was done that they would with tears have laid him to rest beside the little church and have believed they ne'er should look upon his like again.

But this is needless digression, the while he sits on

the temple step and tries to arrange in his poor head what he must say next day, presenting himself once more to ask for a crumb from the Church's table. As it turned out, however, there was no need to think that over. He was no sooner recognized than the attack was opened on the other side:

"You here *again!* What do you mean by hanging about in this way? There is nothing for you. You were told to come next week."

That was more than he could bear; it broke him down. But he had the sense to get away at once; it would have been quite useless to stand sobbing there; somewhere along the dim corridors and echoing staircase he had it out; and when he reached the street, faint and feeble and strangely aged in those few minutes, he had made up his mind to the worst. With some vague idea that it would be easier to ask for bread than for money, he began a pilgrimage to the bakers' shops; but he never got beyond the windows, where he stood and gazed at the long rows of loaves. There was always something to thwart his purpose; in one case the shop was full of customers, in another it was empty and the baker chatting with a neighbor at the door. There was a fatality about it. Then it occurred to him that he had better go to a distant part of the city, where he need not pass daily afterward and be recognized. It was the same thing there. Finally, he decided to

ask for money. Of all the people going to and fro there must be hundreds who could give him something and never miss it. He went along repeating to himself, "*Carità, signori!*" and trying to get accustomed to the sound. He would fix on a person a long way off, and think, "When he comes near—" and the individual would come, and pass, and still he never spoke the word aloud, "*Carità!*" He got into a way of setting himself all manner of strange conditions; if he met three persons, for instance, before he came to the corner of the street, why, then he would ask; yes, if before he got to three corners of the street—ah, what was that? *Three corners of the street!* Was he losing his mind?

At some time in that long day he must have lost his consciousness either in sleep or fainting, but he attracted no attention, and late in the afternoon he was walking out beyond S. Maria Maggiore, without quite knowing how he got into that deserted region of wide-stretching fields and dusty road. The only persons in sight were two ladies coming toward him, and after they had passed they stopped and looked back.

"Is it possible," they said to each other, "that he was begging?"

One becomes pretty well used to beggars in Rome, but it had never happened before, to them at least, that a priest had held out his hand; it was an

incident novel enough to be worth investigating, and they returned to where he still stood, only with hanging hands now and drooping head.

What did he want? "*Carità, signore.*" But he, a *priest*,—how could it be that he was in such straits? He had been in the hospital and had had nothing to eat for two days. It was not exactly an explanation, but they accepted it for that, and, slipping some money into his hand, they turned away.

It was more money than he had in the least expected; it would even tide him over the days until "next week;" but, as he went with thankfulness to get his bread, he thought of something else; those ladies were heretics like Rosalia's people,—either some expression they had used, or intuition, had told him so,—and yet they said, "You, a *priest*, in this distress!" almost as much horrified, nay, alas! more horrified than if they had belonged in the true fold. That was a "touch of nature" that made even heretics his kin. It helped him, too, in coming to his decision about Rosalia.

Is it necessary to say what that decision was? After his late experience, it would be his first duty to put Rosalia beyond the reach of want. Suppose he died, and the padrona turned her into the street, as she would if it were for her advantage so to do.

A *girl* begging her bread? Heaven forbid! So he let her go.

He sees her often, and has never yet discovered an attempt to sap her faith. As to her she is happy as a queen for the present, and is certain to get that dowry by and by. Then there will always be a place for the *zio* at her hearth, and a chair for him at her board, and so his life will not be wasted, for he will be the all-pervading element of love and peace in that young family.

A SPOILT CHILD.

So they called her in the hotel at Grindelwald, and "they" are sometimes more to be relied on than persons with better opportunities of forming opinions. Her father and mother had known her for seventeen years and never yet discovered what was the matter with her. "Mary is not very well" had been a favorite euphemism for her infantile naughtiness, and, as she became a tall, slight delicate-looking girl, the supposition that she was growing too fast was made responsible for any amount of contrariness in Miss Mary. In short, she had run the usual risks of the only child of wealthy parents, but even among spoilt children she was not what she might have been; for if a girl is self-willed and tyrannical, let her at least be so with a good grace and know how to make her despotism popular. She is young and fair, her every wish is gratified and her will is law; what right has she to gloomy, freakish, monosyllabic humors?

And yet Mary could be so charming! She was not

of a demonstrative nature; in her earliest years a honied plea for a kiss invariably brought a thunder-cloud to her baby brow, but she had a winning smile and sweet voice and a pretty manner of caress that was all her own unless it was borrowed from dumb creation. If you were very near and dear to her, and she in her happiest mood, she might put her arms around you and rub her soft cheek on yours, and you would be expected to find that as good as kissing. Whatever were your private sentiments about that or any other of her proceedings, it might be well to take her as she was and say nothing. Such was her mother's way. When Mary smiled, she did her behests with gladness and when a cloud came and the pretty lips were set in quite other lines, she grieved that no sacrifice of hers could give pleasure to her darling. However, the two were so different in character, that even the happy phase furnished its trials. Mrs. Reade was timid and Mary was daring; the one never swerved from the golden mean, the other was full of enthusiasms of which the end might be fatal. In Germany, where Mrs. Reade, as an invalid, had been sent to consult a distinguished specialist, she used to lie awake nights wondering what her husband, at home in America, would say if the sudden passion for music which their child had developed should come to include the long-haired music-master; and in Switz-

erland, where she was spending the summer for her health, she reversed the order of things and worried by day, because the child now thought nothing but mountain excursions worth living for, and she might fall over a precipice or into a crevasse. There was no certainty that this zeal for mountains would conclude so well as the devotion to Beethoven and Mozart. For Herr Langhaar—something of a spoilt child himself and accustomed to a good deal of deference from his pupils—had said one day that if Mary wanted instruction from him, she must do as he bade her, and that was the end of their harmony, literally and metaphorically.

"I'll never speak to him again, and you may tell him so, mamma!"

A pleasant task for an amiable lady! From dreading him, Mrs. Reade melted into pity for the unfortunate man, and spent one more sleepless night in his behalf, thinking how best she could smooth the long-haired feelings in the right direction. But when, instead of being heart-broken at the loss of his promising pupil, he mounted a high horse and from that elevation made plain remarks upon her, the mother experienced a second revulsion of feeling and regretted the sympathy wasted on one so unworthy.

And now it was Kaufmann who made her wretched—Kaufmann the Swiss guide, with his

weather-worn countenance and equally worn trousers, and his ice-axe on his shoulder; Mrs. Reade already looked upon him as no better than the murderer of her child. There was little hope of a disagreement there. Mary and he were on the best of terms. Temporarily out of employment among high peaks, he was thankful to devote his leisure to her on such excursions as her strength sufficed, while she found nothing to object to in him except his pipe. "If you smoke, you must walk behind," she said, and he meekly pocketed his tobacco. His dignity as a guide would not permit that, even on the plainest path, a girl should go ahead, although in her proper place he highly approved of her. He used to relate to his compeers with a sort of fatherly pride how she followed him "like a kid."

Much astonished would the good fellow have been to know of what his *schönes fräulein* was thinking sometimes. In her better moments she called herself "horrid," and it was on the mountains that those moments were apt to come. Heaven knows, as she wandered there gazing mutely around and feeling all Nature's harmony within her, if she did not make her peace with the world in a series of good resolutions such as better people than she have formed before. That she broke them as soon as the best of people need hardly be said; down in

the valley she was as horrid as ever. Still, to be just to her, she had at least escaped some of the lower forms of the spoilt child disorder; she did not make herself odious by taking the best of everything or letting herself be waited on by her long-suffering mother. She even felt responsible for her mother's welfare, and, had there been a danger for them both to encounter, Mary would have put herself forward like a natural protector. But with fears of imaginary perils she knew no patience. Crevasses were beautiful, and how could there be any danger with Kaufmann? So she walked off, leaving agonies of apprehension behind her. She might have gone through fire and water for those she loved, but to exercise the lighter shades of complaisance in their behalf as, for instance, to put on a shawl because somebody else felt cold, she had never learned.

The people in the hotel soon found her out on those little matters; they were mostly English and said: "If that is the way American girls behave to their mothers!" Nevertheless, there were things they liked about her. If a subscription for some inundated village went the rounds they were quite impressed by Miss Reade's munificence, and when an organ was wanted for the English chapel—"one of your nice American organs, you know"—it was told all over the house what Mary had given; they were grateful that she did not take the "no matter

how small a sum" for an excuse to contribute as little as decently might be. Her father kept her well supplied with pocket-money and but a slight portion of it was spent upon herself. The care of her personal adorning she left to her mother and often forgot to wear the pretty things provided for her. She did not know what to do with her beauty, not even when a handsome young Italian, stranded in Switzerland and regretting the softer landscape of the Bagni di Lucca, endeavored to solace his exile with a little flirtation. Passing the house in review, he saw no one more suitable to fall in love with than Mary, and was convinced, without need of looking about, that he was the only fitting object for her young affections, but when he curled his hair and turned away his shirt-collar and, smiling, advanced to conquest with: "Mees have make a walk to-day?" "Mees" looked at him with ineffable disdain and would hardly answer.

Those in sympathy with her passion of the moment might, however, fare better. She had two lovers at that very time, and because one of them had ascended all the horns in Switzerland he was the favored one. Of course he was the wrong one. This time, Mrs. Reade had not the sole responsibility, but there was little comfort in the thought that it was as much her husband's fault as hers if George had been allowed the run of their house as a neigh-

bor's child. There had been no sign of more than friendly feeling between him and Mary until they met in Europe and she was fascinated by his prowess as a mountaineer. Then it occurred to her parents that he was the last man they should want for a son-in-law. They saw fit to be just as particular who should have their spoilt girl as if she had been a model. They would not have minded giving her to a poor man, if that were all, but a man with no prospects and expensive habits and a reputation which of late was not so good as it might be—it was a great distress. Mr. Reade's decision was supposed to be pending and, for form's sake, the word "engagement" was avoided, but every one knew it was enough if Mary's mind were made up.

With regard to the other lover it must be admitted that, though he would have suited her friends, she did not suit his. Mr. Clement Mason was universally considered a very fine young man, in which opinion Mrs. Mason, his stepmother, fully concurred, only, in view of his infatuation for Mary, she sighed and reflected that the best of men have their weak points. She wondered how Clement, already in deacon's orders, could think of marrying a girl like that and then promising to make his family "a wholesome example and pattern to the flock." A pretty parish it would be in which she was a pattern! Mary had had, to be sure, what the malicious

might call an attack of religion. She had accepted that class in the Sunday-school which would almost appear to be the only known means of directing a young person's steps heavenward, and if she taught her boys that it was well to be humble and meek it may have done her good, while if they forgot her answers to their questions as readily as they would have forgotten more profitable information, her theology did them no harm; still, whatever benefit she had obtained was of an occult nature, and as we are apt to value other people's piety by the amount of comfort which we, ourselves, derive from it, Mrs. Mason could not think very highly of Mary's. She was bound to Mrs. Reade by the tender tie of an old school-friendship, but though her affection by no means blinded her to her friend's weakness, and she said, "She has herself to blame," or of Mary, "Poor girl, she is to be pitied," that did not prevent her continuing to pity Mrs. Reade and blame Mary as before. Her own only child, her little Willie, gave her trouble enough, being one of those angelic children who invariably take infantile disorders very hardly; but then, with a mother that sort of trouble does not count; she rejoiced in his sweetness and wished her poor friend were half so fortunate as she. Clement need not tell her there was much that was admirable as well as lovable in Mary. There was much that was

pretty in her, and that was the whole story. In church, for instance, when she sang, the expression she wore would have made one think her rightly named for the Blessed among women, and yet even there, a singular change might pass over that sweet face. If any one who had attained to years of discretion *must* turn round to see where the beautiful voice came from, Mary was as likely as not to stop short and answer such injudicious curiosity with a frown.

Mrs. Mason imagined the effect of that on some unlucky churchwarden who should chance to fix his eyes on the rector's wife at what she considered an inopportune moment! But fortunately, Clement's future congregation would not be scandalized by her eccentricities. It was one of those cases where she "likes him very much only not in that way," and so when he was permitted to join the Kaufmann expeditions, or when Mary and he walked alone, Mrs. Mason saw them go with a quiet mind. She simply "wondered" at Clement or, if Mary had been especially exasperating, hoped his sense of duty would lead him to speak thus and thus to her. Whether duty required it or not, it was a fact that Clement could say whatever he chose to Mary without incurring her displeasure; there was sympathy between them even though he did not scale mountains. Only one subject he might not approach. She

turned the conversation then, and if he persisted, they quarreled.

When he and Mary had no particular aim for their walk and had climbed high enough to content her, they found a seat and looked down on the green, peaceful valley or up where the clouds wreathed snowclad summits and glaciers stretched immaculately white. Then it might be that Mary, overtaken by a fit of penitence, confided to her companion her sense of her short-comings. Knowing no more than anyone else a good reason for them, she had cast about to find one. Some people believed in guardian angels, but she was provided with an attendant spirit of another order, and he it was who was responsible for all her ill-humors.

"I've almost seen him, Clement," she declared.

According to Clement, the one at the bottom of the mischief was simply a young person who ought to know better. His may have been the correct theory but appearances were all in favor of hers. As she sat there with her hat off, turning to him a very sweet face and serious eyes, while the light behind her made a halo of such stray hair as would not be brought to order, it seemed far more likely to be "he"—the malicious imp—than she who frowned and gloomed and set everything at sixes and sevens.

Or perhaps they talked of his affairs, of the church he was to build and for the decoration of which she

had a series of propositions to offer. She was of the opinion that "our churches at home are too bare." She wished him, also, while he was about it, to build a beautiful rectory with Gothic windows. He was for giving all the beauty to the church but when she insisted, he yielded so far as to say:

"If *you* would like it, Mary."

While Clement was not officially accepted, he might say a thing of that sort, and he said it just as often as occasion offered, even though its sole effect was to make her get up and walk on. If he said no more, it was well and good; if he continued, it might be anything but that. She was then as pettish and rude as she had been gentle and sweet before.

The grand quarrel of the season was not, however, on that topic. It took place at Zermatt, for Mary had decided they must go there, and that a week would suffice for Paris before they sailed for home. Some of the party were considerably disturbed by this arrangement. Mrs. Mason would not desert her friend, but her well-laid plans for shopping and dressmaking were sadly interfered with, and when Clement, unaware of a grievance, seemed to approve of the new plan, he was asked: Did he think it right, then, that Mary should ride over them all? To such a monstrous supposition

his only answer was that amount of surprise which may be concentrated in "My dear mother!"

As if to reward Mary for her inconsiderate behavior, her hero, George, descended at Zermatt one fine day from a series of peaks and *cols*—some of them "till then unattempted"—in high good-humor with the success of his expedition and disposed to be agreeable to everybody. Among old acquaintances like the Reades and Masons this amiability was compatible with his being very much at his ease. He was a fine, powerful young man, but it requires a good deal of beauty to carry off that style of dress in which the M. A. C. delights after a stiff bit of work. Some of the old acquaintances, if they excused his slippers, thought his position, with his hands in his pockets and his chair tilted against the wall, anything but graceful. They might not have wished him a slip on the *arêtes* he talked about and yet might have been rather glad to see him sprawl on the piazza floor. He, however, was as well versed in balancing himself on the hind legs of a chair, with a little assistance from the back of his head, as in performing mountain gymnastics. Not that he did not know how to behave like a gentleman, but he said, "A man can't be always thinking of his manners."

Urged by Mary's eager questions he described his scrambles, and for the whole party it was rather a

breathless narrative at times; one must feel a certain interest in getting a fellow-creature safely over a ridge with a few thousand feet of precipice on either side. But that was nothing, he said; to cross a steep slope of rock glazed with ice was twice as bad. Eventually, that turned out to be "nothing" either, when you are used to it. But however much he swaggered, he appeared to better advantage so than when the ladies had gone, leaving him and Clement together.

George's college career had finished abruptly; since then, Clement and he had hardly met and George had completed his education for himself. The fancy took him now to give his companion an inkling of what he had learned. It would be fun to "make the deacon's hair stand on end," and in that view he turned the conversation into undelectable channels. When Clement told him in the plainest terms what he thought of his opinions and exploits, George was not a whit offended. He said, "O come, Clem!" but he laughed. You expect that from a parson. He expected it from every one, in fact, and would have been disappointed not to be thought dreadful.

Of course it was George and Mary, now, who strolled away together, but their conversation rarely took the turn one is apt to imagine between lovers. George, after a little time, found Mary

neither so entertaining nor so easy to entertain as other young ladies whom he knew. That did not surprise him for he had an idea that people who were going to marry were not so jolly as if they were only flirting. Marriage was a serious matter; and if you must have a rich girl, there was not so much choice. Yet he could hardly be called a fortune-hunter, either, for he was vain enough to suppose that any heiress would accept him without much trouble on his part, and felt it quite meritorious that he thought of "settling" already. But opportunity and the Fates had seemed to point to Mary, and, as she was pretty and he liked her well enough, he was satisfied with his prospects. Her parents disapproved of him, of course, but then if she wanted him she would have him in spite of that. He did reflect that when a man marries he generally reforms, after a fashion; but, at the same time he thought he should not marry directly—there was no great hurry.

George was not a favorite in society. With the help of much slang and a freedom of speech bordering on impertinence, he could always keep his partners laughing; they called it "his way" and were amused at it "in him," but Mary was such a little simplicity that half the time she would not have understood his *chaff*, so he let her do the most of the talking, throwing himself down in the first

shade they came to and absolutely refusing to go farther. It might be "ever so much nicer higher up;" he did not care nor did he mind being called lazy.

"You, a member of the Alpine Club! Aren't you ashamed?" she asked, and sat down by him.

Not a bit ashamed. What was the use of climbing a hill?

He, if any man, ought to know it was always better the higher one went, she said. "O George! if only I could stand on one of those snowy peaks! But Kaufmann declared it was n't possible I should have the strength at my age, and I should n't want to attempt anything and have to turn back." She looked wistfully up at the towering summit of the Matterhorn.

"We'll go there together, perhaps—ten years hence," said he, with smiling condescension. She deigned no notice of such a promise.

"If I had wings! And, once up there, I should want them more than ever. You know that feeling —that you would like to be borne away. It does n't seem so impossible, either, when one is very high up and so light, as if one had no body."

"Good plan to eat something when you feel like that. You must be hungry."

Though she said, "Do n't!" she was still persuaded that because he had been in Nature's most impreg-

nable fortresses he knew all her secrets; and on her shining summits with the glory of earth at his feet, with the majesty of solitude around, with the sky so near, she thought he must feel a longing for wings to bear mortality to some place where it should be more in unison with immortal beauty. A girl who stood on the heights at dawn as in a temple, was not likely to imagine that, for him, a snow slope rising clear against the blue and glittering in the morning sun might awaken no other sentiment than could be condensed into an oath expressive of surprise or satisfaction to see the top so close at hand.

They had certainly little in common on the subject of mountains. He had no idea what she meant by calling his Alpine scrambles a "noble" pursuit. Whatever they may be to many who undertake them, they were not that to him. He had begun his mountaineering from curiosity to see what he could do, and he continued it to show that he could do everything, but he was not sure it "paid;" he was a little tired of it already, and thought he had done about enough. And while to Mary there was something inspiring in the thought of a few men linked together by a rope in face of peril and mutually dependent on each other's skill and courage, he inclined to take a more practical view of the matter.

"The rope is the thing on the glacier, of course; there, if one man gets into a crevasse the rest can pull him out, but on rocks you may be in such a position that if one goes, all go. I don't like a rope everywhere. In some places I'd rather take only my own risks."

"I'm sure you would never pull anyone down," said Mary, confidently. She thought it was his responsibility to his companions that concerned him. He had to look at her for the space of a minute before he took that in. "And besides," she continued, "if anyone slipped in such a place that the others could not help him, he could cut the rope."

"Could he?" with a tinge of contempt for such absurdity. "He would need to have a cutting implement handier than is likely in such cases."

"Why, such a knife as you wear at your belt."

"And how long do you suppose one would hang there thinking about it?" he inquired, rather gloomily, not minded to be a hero if he could possibly help it.

"O, you don't think when you do those things," she answered, and then, satisfied to have refuted the objections which she supposed were raised simply to tease her, she turned to another topic whereon he was equally astray.

She thought it good to see a little of a different class of people; one could learn something from

one's guides. From Kaufmann she appeared to have learned various things, none of which, however, were particularly interesting to George.

"The people of Grindelwald are so poor. They live on potatoes and cheese, and think what they go through to get only that! I went into Kaufmann's house, one day. Such a place! But he must think it nice for he seemed pleased to have me see it. And his daughter, about as old as I, carrying great pails of water and looking so smiling and contented!" Mary, of course, was thinking of a different style of house and of somebody's daughter who was not always smiling, but George did not care how his guides lived. If he had ever thought of it he supposed they lived royally, in their fashion, on what he paid them; and as to their being contented, he imagined people of that sort were naturally contented, like cows and sheep. Still, he kept his indifference to himself.

"Ah, you can understand them; so can I when they talk about a mountain, but my guides might give me their whole family history, from their great-grandfather down, and I should be none the wiser. I don't know French and German."

It might be, at another time, that the tables were turned, and Mary was unable to comprehend George when he touched on his subjects—horses, for instance. He had sold his horse before he left home. She was

greatly surprised. She wondered that anybody wanted it. She had never supposed he would be able to sell that horse.

"Why, he was a nice-looking animal," said George.

"Nice-looking, yes; but when he was laid up every four weeks with that foot! You said, yourself, he was not worth anything. I can't imagine anyone's wanting such a horse, even though he secured it for almost nothing."

George did not say whether he had sold it for nothing or no, but he felt that Mary's way of wondering "why?" and looking as much astonished as if she came from another planet was slightly annoying. To be sure, a girl need not necessarily be aware that in respect to a horse some people think you may do as you have been done by, but, at all events, when he called Mary—to himself—"a little innocent," it was with no admiration for the simple-mindedness that conceives not even a suspicion of double-dealing. However, he supposed she would alter as she grew older. In fact, he expected her to improve a good deal by living with him.

George stayed but a few days in Zermatt and went away, rather spoiling the relief his departure afforded to some persons by a promise of turning up in America before long. It was after he had gone and when Mary felt it especially incumbent on her to

defend the absent, that Clement and she had a discussion on the desirability of climbing mountains. Clement would not have thought of warning Mary against George, of saying anything in regard to his real character,—it was only her father who could do that and Heaven grant she might listen to him,—but perhaps, unknown to himself, the mere fact that George had been on the Matterhorn made it seem a poor object for ambition. He declared he could see nothing fine in going up a mountain that was a few thousand feet higher and more difficult of access than some others. He thought it wrong to risk one's life to do it, and especially wrong to induce others to risk theirs in accompanying one.

Mary was provoked by this attack on what she considered "noble" to say the sort of thing a man can never bear to hear. Clement knew, doubtless, of a courage higher than the merely physical and which ought bravely to endure the name of coward, but, for all that, he was deeply wounded when Mary said that in those who would not dare to imitate the exploits of others it was graceful, at least, not to detract from them. He could not speak to her again while those words rankled in his mind, and by evening, he had decided to go and join a friend of his. He should meet them later, in Paris, he said, when he bade good-bye. Of course it was plain that Mary and he had quarreled. One of the mothers was

delighted to see him stand on his dignity, while the other wondered how he could take so ill anything her Mary said. It was only Mary herself who eventually learned the real object of his departure.

Two or three days after, the chambermaid told her mysteriously that there was a man of Grindelwald who would like to speak with her, if she pleased.

"Why, that must be Kaufmann!"

Yes, it was Kaufmann. He was just over the Matterhorn from Breuil, and he had brought something for her.

What he could have found at Breuil to bring her was too great an enigma to be left long unsolved; she went in search of Kaufmann directly. He rose from the bench where he was sunning himself and doffed his hat with clumsy courtesy, but after the first compliments he cast a cautious glance around and produced a piece of paper which he handed to her. It was folded like a note, but it bore no address; it was dirty and crumpled and it smelt of tobacco.

"Open it, there's writing inside," he said, encouragingly.

There was not much. Only a few words, dated from Breuil.

"It requires no superhuman courage to ascend the Matterhorn, but I am more than ever persuaded that the man who does it is very foolish. C. M."

"Did you go with him?" she asked, after reading the note twice to make sure she was not dreaming.

"No, I was just starting over with a gentleman when he came down, and he gave me that for you," and Kaufmann smiled at her and winked. Finding himself in the secret, he wished to intimate that he thought none the worse of her or of Clement for sticking to each other, in spite of everybody.

"Did you speak with his guide? How did he do it?" asked Mary, still all amazement. "He was not—he was not afraid?"

"He did not know enough to be afraid," said Kaufmann, sententiously, "but the man who went with him was; and he's the best guide in Zermatt, *fräulein*. You see, the Matterhorn isn't just the mountain, to begin with. Now, if he had tried Monte Rosa! I'd as leave take him up Monte Rosa as not. You might tell him so, *fräulein*."

"I don't believe he'll do anything more."

"No, it's late for this season, but if he wants to begin again, next year, you tell him Kaufmann will take him up Monte Rosa," said the worthy man, benevolently. "He'll never go like a chamois, as you do, *fräulein*, but still something can be made of him, no doubt."

Mary, as she tore her note into bits and scattered them to the wind, was lost in wonder that Clement

could have been so silly. He was right in calling it intensely foolish in *him* to go up the Matterhorn. His indignation with himself at having done what he disapproved in others, his humiliating consciousness of his folly did not move her to pity.

"I never meant he would not have courage enough if it were necessary," she said to herself. Then she whistled and sang like a blackbird, delighted perhaps that, however much courage he had, he could not do what George did. She thought the whole affair rather amusing, especially when Mrs. Mason wondered and speculated as to why Clement had been so long in getting to Geneva.

Mary left her good spirits behind her when they went to Paris. There, she displayed only gloomy indifference as to the fit of her gowns and accompanied the shopping expeditions a fractious martyr to the circumstance that she was "the only one who could speak." She hated Paris and everything about it except the one thing that all the others hated, namely, crossing the crowded thoroughfares; that rather amused her. She was glad when they walked just for the excitement she found in convoying her trembling flock from one sidewalk to the other. The total disregard of the rights of foot-passengers in Paris is somewhat trying to the nervous, and persons of that constitution are not apt to be cheered by the sign displayed here and

there along the streets, *Secours aux blessés;* the knowledge that one will be decently cared for when something terrible has happened does not necessarily engender boldness, and the two ladies, dreading those offices of mercy, would have lingered on the curbstone and let all their chances go by if Mary had not led the way. When they were fairly over the street they declared in their thankfulness that she was as good as a policeman. Little Willie, by his mother's anxious bidding, always kept close to her on such occasions and shared the panic, only one day, with a sudden and most unusual exuberance of spirits it occurred to him to run ahead. They were at the Avenue de l'Opéra, where one needs to have eyes in every direction, and he did not even see his fate until it was close upon him—a carriage rolling swiftly and noiselessly over the asphalt; then, paralysed by terror, he stood still and awaited it. Mary heard his mother's scream and, darting forward, caught him as by a miracle from the impending danger, but it was only averting one calamity to encounter another; the next instant she herself was lying motionless on the pavement. With the spring that had been so timely for the child, one of her light feet had done the last service of that kind it would ever render, for even if it could be saved she must always be lame.

Here our spoilt child ought to develop an unsuspected sweetness of disposition and bear her sufferings with a touching resignation. Alas! instead of being resigned, she was in a sort of silent rage at her misfortune. She listened to no praise,—she had done it because she could not help it,—she would not see little Willie and his mother's gratitude oppressed her. Only, after a while, she said that Clement might come to her.

It would be hard to describe what he felt seeing her on her little white bed by which they had placed beautiful flowers, as one might deck a shrine; her fair, colorless face looked like that of some sweet young saint, only for the droop at the corners of the lips which indicated that suffering was not precisely, her vocation. He did not let his feelings prevail but gave such advice and counsel as he had often given before, and she listened patiently as she had always done and admitted that she was bearing her trouble very ill. As he set that trouble before her in the various lights that could be thrown upon it, peace gradually and visibly stole over her. She accepted the consequences of the bargain,—her foot for the child's life,—and in spirit took up her crutch to limp on her further way. Only when Clement had reconciled her to thus much there was still something more that he might do.

"Will you write to George?" she asked.

To give her the very slightest comfort he would have done anything, though he knew well that George would hardly leave his London engagements to join a melancholy little household like theirs. But he might write to Mary, and Clement made it plain that that, at least, would be expected of him. He had no idea how much he was requiring, how difficult it would be for George to put his sympathy on paper. After reading those sad tidings, the letter which he began in answer advanced as far as: "My dear Mary, I was very sorry to hear of your accident," and there came to a full stop. He was sorry, he thought it an awful pity; but any other thoughts he had on the matter were not such as would serve to eke out his epistle. He considered it entirely useless, for instance, that she had sacrificed herself for a poor little brat like Willie who would probably never live to grow up. Then he began to imagine how this might alter Mary. Peculiar she had always been, and, now that she was lame, she would require a great deal of sympathy, no doubt; she would be exacting and want somebody always with her to talk about her health and make much of her. If his fancy did not absolutely picture himself in the character of an attentive and devoted husband, it made him uncomfortable enough to feel the need of a change of scene, and after trying a few alterations, such as: "I was

very much shocked to hear of your accident," or, "I have just heard of your accident and am greatly distressed," he decided to let the accident alone for the present and go out. He had still "just heard" of it when he took up the letter again and he stuck to that formula, as having the advantage that, if Mary did not receive his note as soon as she had expected, she could think he had been out of town. After all, it mattered little what words he chose; he was expressive enough in what he did not say, and Mary learned much from his letter.

The doctor came two or three times a day, just then, and wondered at the sudden change for the worse. But youth and devoted nursing prevailed in the end, though Mary looked so wan and fragile when she first got up and began to use her crutch, that the doctor sent them to Italy instead of home to a northern winter.

As the Reades were to travel with friends there was no excuse for Clement's accompanying them on the score of being necessary, and he went with Mrs. Mason to her steamer but he did not sail with her. He thought a month or two in England would be of great service to him, before taking priest's orders. It was plain enough that Italy would suit him still better, but Mrs. Mason's heart was so changed to Mary, now, that she only wished there were more hope for him.

Clement stayed in England heroically for three months, and only when he could bear it no longer went to Florence. He felt that he had been indeed heroic when he saw Mary again. He had thought of her all that while as pale and drooping, and he found her in the bloom of loveliness and health. There was now always a sweet tinge of rose in her fair face, and as for lameness there was just enough of it left to make her gait the prettiest of motions, he thought; just enough left so that she could not spring in and out of a carriage as she used, but must lean for a moment on his arm. Such was his first impression before he realized that he had come to fresh torments.

He soon discovered that Mary was deeply engrossed in painting. She said, rather sadly, that she must find quiet employments, now that she could not lead the same active life as before, but to Clement that seemed no reason why her teacher, Signor Landini, should be always in the way. Either he was just coming to give a lesson or else they were going with him to some gallery, and, though Clement was asked to join the party, it was only to see the Italian monopolize Mary on pretence of explaining the pictures to her. He believed there was something far more serious here than in the ephemeral episode with George. She had been then only a child, taken with his prowess and pleased that

he should like her, but now a change had come over her, and, though Clement could not have described it, he knew instinctively what it meant when he saw her so much sweeter and more gentle than of yore. What could her mother be thinking of? She who, when there was not a particle of danger, had suffered agonies of fear lest Mary should take a fancy to a foreigner!

"Why, you don't suppose there is anything in *that*, Clement!" she said. "It is only that Mary is anxious to improve herself in painting, and the time is so short and Signor Landini's criticisms so valuable."

Clement smiled bitterly, though he pitied the poor foolish mother, too, when she talked in incoherent agitation about Mr. Reade's coming in a few weeks, —as if it were not already too late!—and even proposed that Clement himself should speak to Mary.

"She has always listened to you, you know," said Mrs. Reade, pleadingly.

He was astonished at her. As if it were possible for *him* to interfere! Nevertheless, he did speak the very next time he found himself with Mary, though when Mrs. Reade went away and left them together he had not the slightest intention of doing so. It came about through Mary's mentioning her father and the excursions she proposed for his pleasure.

"Signor Landini says we ought to go to Siena; it is a most interesting place."

"Do you think your father would enjoy it?" asked Clement, drily.

"Why not?"

He walked to the window and stood there without answering.

"What do you mean, Clement?"

"You know very well what I mean."

Silence reigned for a while; then Mary asked innocently:

"Do you think father won't like Signor Landini?"

"Do *you* think he will?" He turned and faced her, but her eyes avoided his and her color deepened. Then suddenly she shook off her embarrassment and, coming to the window beside him, said calmly:

"You see that man down there? The one with a hand-cart who is bawling oranges for sale. Well, if I wanted to marry *him*, I believe father would consent—eventually."

He looked at her with indignation, but the look soon changed. Defiant, wilful, cruel though she were, she was still herself and there was none like her.

"Have pity on your own youth and inexperience!" he pleaded. "Give yourself time. Think what you are doing! Do you believe you can really cast loose from home and friends and country without a pang?"

"I am not thinking of any such thing."

"Then you assume that he can adapt himself to your life?"

"I hope so."

"But that is not enough. Wait, at least, till there is reasonable certainty of it. Wait till you have seen him in other surroundings, till you are certain of your own mind. For you are so young, Mary! You know nothing of the world as yet."

"O I'll wait," she said, half shy and half smiling. "I'm not in such a hurry. Perhaps I'd better go into company for a year. Tell me what you think is best, Clement, and I will do it. You know I always do what you advise me. *Don't* I?" she persisted, sweetly, as he turned away and flung himself in a chair.

"At least, if I don't at first I do in the end," she added. "And I really and truly will do anything you ask me about—about getting married."

He made no reply; he could not speak, and Mrs. Reade, who returned just then, looked from one to the other as she seated herself and took up her embroidery. Still not a word was said until she asked:

"Have you been quarreling?"

Then Mary skimmed across the room like a swallow with drooping wing, and, sinking down at

her mother's feet, said, with something between a laugh and a sob:

"I've told Clement I'd do anything he asked me—and he does not ask me."

Mrs. Reade looked at him with a radiant smile.

"Is it true?" he exclaimed, almost as if he suspected some cruel jest.

"Let Mary tell you," was the answer, but Mary was at that moment just her own old wayward self once more, and when he drew her away from her mother's knees she simply hid her face upon his breast and would not let him even look at her.

AIMÉE.

I.

MR., MRS. AND MISS HYDE were traveling in Europe. It must at once be said that Miss Hyde was not the daughter of the family. Her sister-in-law speedily disabused any one who chanced to attribute that tall girl to her. *Her* daughter was only ten years old, and "was at home with grandmamma, who could not bear to part with her." That point being settled, however, and, lest the zeal with which any maternal interest had been disclaimed should lead astray in another direction, she was ready to add that Amy was just eighteen. There is no use in letting people suppose even your sister-in-law to be older than she is. So Mrs. Hyde proclaimed Amy's youth in public, although that did not prevent her from reproaching her in private with being "as old as the hills." Precisely what she meant by this charge it might be difficult to state clearly. It was made whenever their tastes differed, and it

probably signified nothing more than that Amy was not what her sister-in-law remembered herself to have been at the same age. Perhaps she was not. If, for instance, there is an exact measure for the interest that a young girl should take in shopping, considered in the abstract as a feminine occupation, Amy may not have come up to the mark. That is not to say that she had no proper regard for a new bonnet. She would conscientiously inspect the millinery until some combination of velvet and feathers, viewed on all sides with the assistance of a hand-glass, struck her as being the right thing, and then she was ready to go; she looked weary if Mrs. Hyde lingered; she asked "what was the use" when further pressed to "just try on" this or that.

"*Mademoiselle a raison,*" said the French milliner, approvingly, "*c'est ce chapeau-ci qui lui convient.*"

But Mrs. Hyde thought that even when "mademoiselle" had found the hat that suited her she should still have tried on all the rest, or rather she should have made no choice until everything in the shop had been passed in review. It was a slight matter, but it went to prove what she had in common with the hills. Perhaps a more striking example might be given. Were you, lady reader, ever in a company where your own sex exclusively prevailed, and can you recall conversing with some youthful representative of it on a topic to you, at least, tolerably inter-

esting—say, your own and her mother's "young days"? She listened, she laughed, she questioned, and had just called up some quite particular reminiscence when the door opened and the first dress-coat of the evening appeared. It was not *the* dress-coat, the especial one that must always create commotion in some particular breast; it was simply a chance bit of tailor's work that broke off your sentence in mid-air. For why go on when you see that the gleam in your companion's eye and the smile that dawns upon her lips have nothing to do with the point of your story? She does not even know that you have ceased speaking; her gaze is turned from you; her heart is with her thoughts, "and they are far away," at the other side of the room, whither she presently follows them, pressing in among her compeers, who have closed around the newcomer, and inquiring with an excited giggle, "How did you get home last night, Mr. So-and-So?"

Now, had it been Amy with whom you were talking nothing of the kind would have happened. She would have been conscious of agitation around her, and would have glanced, as you did, toward the door, but then she would have turned back and listened to hear the rest. After that you will probably think her unlike the girls of her day; fond memory may suggest that she resembles those of yours,

which—begging excuse for what might seem a personality—again tends to prove the truth of her sister-in-law's comparison. However, as in the case of the bonnets, there were mitigating circumstances. When *he* made his way to her—as he must do if *she* does not take the shortest way to him—she looked up and smiled, and though her joy at the sight of him did not burst forth in the well-worn question, "How did you get home?" some other form of words may have conveyed an idea that his incomings and outgoings were not absolutely indifferent—that at least she was not displeased if his steps had led him again to her. Nor was she. She did not go into company to sit unnoticed in the corner. She owed it to herself, like every young girl, to have as many of the other sex about her as possible. Why else was she at the ball? So when *he* came she knew how to keep him as long as it was desirable that he should stay; that is, until somebody appeared who pleased her better, and who, very likely, in his turn, might be required to yield to the same force of circumstances. Should any one think that as bad as if she had rushed at him, why, it is simply a matter of taste.

Such as she was, her brother took her without much comment. When most favorably disposed to her he would say, "I brought that child up;" which meant that he had petted and played with her

while she was small enough to sit on his knee, that he had carped at her not a little in her lanky years, and that he was now rather proud of the fine girl she had grown to be. If, on the contrary, he saw anything in her to disapprove of, he said, "That is just like Uncle Charles." And Uncle Charles was a proverb for folly in the family, renowned unto the second generation for always doing what he ought not to have done. Let it suffice to say that he had lost a fortune in a series of philanthropic speculations that "any fool" but him would have known enough to keep out of, and that his precept was, if possible, worse than his practice; his theories in respect to sublunary things in general being considered by his relatives and friends properly to account for his ill-success in life. So if ever Amy made an unpractical suggestion she was "set down" with an allusion to this reprehensible uncle, although, generally speaking, her brother thought her as sensible as could be expected. And what more should one say of eighteen? Why describe her moral and intellectual development at the length of many pages—her firmness, her courage, her prudence, her attainments in art, science and philosophy—as though she had sprung into life full armed? She had simply studied enough at school to be aware that she knew nothing; in spite of which, as she looked out into the world with wondering, expectant eyes, there was a

dignity, a self-containedness, about her which seemed to say that what life might bring would not find her all unprepared.

The just-mentioned sense of ignorance was made doubly poignant to Amy by finding herself precisely where it would have been a comfortable thing to know a great deal. How stupid to have studied history at school, and discover in Italy that one knew nothing about the Medici! She poured over the meagre pages of her guidebook and sat up late reading a history of Florence, and asked questions, somewhat shamefacedly, but still she asked; and if her brother gave ambiguous answers, then Charlier, the courier must be more explicit. It was not enough to tell her that a mass of stone and cement was Dolabella's Arch; she immediately inquired, "Who was Dolabella?" Mrs. Hyde conferred the feminine gender on that worthy, and did not care to know who she was. To take one's erudition beyond the Colosseum, vaguely connected in her mind with Christian martyrs, appeared to her quite unnecessary, and rather tiresome in Amy besides, inasmuch as it kept them standing about while Mr. Hyde, thus challenged, thought over his Roman consuls.

It is at Florence, however, that we first meet our travelers on a certain morning, when, after several days of steady sightseeing, two of the party felt justified in lingering over the breakfast table. Amy

was ready for a move. To save time, she had been "reading up" while they talked; her fingers still marked the places in Baedeker, and she was about to propose a plan for improving the shining hours when her sister-in-law anticipated her: "Why shouldn't we take to-day for shopping? There are lots of things I want to get before we leave."

"Such as—?" Mr. Hyde inquired.

"Mosaics, for one thing. We have been here a week, and haven't seen them yet."

"I should say we have seen nothing else," quoth Amy. "Every other shop window is full of them."

"Much good that does me! I want to buy some. It's no use putting everything off till we come back from Rome. Who can tell if we shall come this way? We were going back to Interlachen, you know. I intend henceforth to follow that advice of somebody's to travellers in Europe: 'If you see anything you want, clutch it.' I didn't clutch that lovely little carved crumb-brush at Interlachen, and I shall never find one like it again." Then, at a wistful glance cast into the red covered book: "Now, Amy don't! We gave two whole days to the Pitti and Uffizi, and we stayed so long in the Bargello yesterday that I thought the end of my nose never would come white again, I was so chilled. If we haven't done the whole duty of man by the Florentine galleries, I don't know who has."

"Only there's the Belle Arti still, and Charlier says the Egyptian Museum—"

"You and Charlier will give me a fever."

"We might at least go somewhere this morning."

"I'm worn out with seeing things."

"Let's begin with mosaics, then," said Mr. Hyde, the umpire. "But it need n't take all day, Amy. *Ou est mong courrier?*" to the waiter who flourished a napkin behind them and wished them farther.

"Courier, sir? I shall call him;" and at the prospect of their going at last the slippered heels were flung out with more than usual alacrity.

"Never know which of these fellows speak French," muttered Mr. Hyde.

"None of them do—to us," said his sister.

"Yes, that's the way. These foreigners are always thrusting their bad English at you, and never giving you a chance to retaliate."

Mr. Hyde was accustomed to say that to travel profitably one should know enough of the language of the country "to carry one through." And although that did not mean a great deal with him, since the courier was there for the transaction of business, there were still occasions when a French or Italian sentence, acquired from the phrasebook, might have been happily placed if only time had been granted him to select what suited the circum-

stance. But he had yet to encounter the waiter or clerk who would stand patiently by while he rummaged his memory, his features wearing the while the same agonized yet confident expression that he must have had when, a boy and repeating his lessons, he begged not to be told, because he "should remember in a minute." It was no slight aggravation to be served then with his mother-tongue, and that chopped fine as if for the benefit of his feeble intellect. The courier's English was fortunately of a different order; Charlier spoke as correctly as one to the manner born. In answer to their surprise at this fact he said only that he had learned the language when young, though it appeared he had been neither in England nor America. His speech was not the only un-courier like point about him. They had a theory that he was a nobleman in reduced circumstances who had taken to his present mode of earning a living until some stroke of fortune restored him to his rights; and, jest though it was, he really did differ from most of the sharp-eyed, bustling men who with some slight show of civility drive their parties through Europe like so many head of cattle. He had a gentleness of voice and manner that seemed as if it must have been inborn, and then perhaps a scrupulous neatness and nicety of everything about him helped to confirm an impression of his being above his class. In com-

menting on this apparent superiority they always did him the justice to admit that it was not an idea which he sought to convey. He "knew his place," as Mr. Hyde often boasted to traveling acquaintances whose couriers neither knew nor kept theirs.

"*I'm* the master," he would say. "Who wants to be told what hotel to go to? I choose the one I like, and Charlier makes his arrangements accordingly. I think I see myself kept in leading-strings by a courier!"

And as to honesty, Charlier might be entrusted with untold sums. "And really he doesn't want for education. He is a superior sort of fellow, in fact," was apt to be the conclusion of the panegyric.

It was an amusing circumstance to Mr. Hyde that Charlier did not, as he expressed it, "want for education." A learned courier was more than he had counted on. He would come from Vieusseux's, where he read the papers, and say to his wife and sister, "Who do you suppose I met there with some great books under his arm? Charlier! And they were not novels, either; I could see that. Think of his subscribing at the library!"

However, so long as he was unobtrusive in his vocation he might be what he liked out of it; and that he was unobtrusive is certain, since otherwise,

after the manner of his kind, he would have been "the master." As it was, he bought tickets and saw baggage weighed, he called carriages and paid coachmen, he did what he was engaged to do, and nothing more. If he were consulted as to what was worth seeing, he could tell; he had any information ready that was wanted, but it was not given unsought. Mr. Hyde's independence would have revolted as much at being told what to think of a picture as what hotel to choose; and it was by a mutual understanding between employer and employed that they let each other alone.

But, though Charlier offered no information to Mr. Hyde, who would have resented it, or to Mrs. Hyde, who would have been bored by it, he departed from the rule with Miss Hyde. Naturally, if she asked a question he could but answer, only sometimes she did not ask; when it was a thing that she ought to have known, that her eighteen years fancied it an eternal disgrace to be ignorant of, she was silent. A close observer would have noted how thoughtful she suddenly became, how her eyes fixed themselves in that intense gaze that sees nothing. Mr. Hyde might go on with the description of church, temple or ruin, whatever it was, which he was reading aloud for the family benefit; she was hopelessly left behind, caught on some provoking point from which she could not get free. Then if Charlier said in a

discreet aside, not to interrupt the reader, "You know, Miss Hyde," and mentioned the very thing that she did not know, the little anxious wrinkles smoothed away in a moment from her fair brow and an air of satisfaction diffused itself over the young face.

Charlier went with them everywhere to show the way and cope with the cab-drivers—very little for an accomplished courier to perform apart from those opportunities that Amy gave him for exercising his higher functions as a dispenser of miscellaneous facts. On the whole, Amy turned to him in preference to her brother; it was not only that Charlier could not in the nature of things, mingle disdainful condescension with his reply, but she had an impression that he really felt none of that evil joy that so many of us know on perceiving ourselves to be wiser than our neighbors. His knowledge was too self-possessed to be startled by any ignorance. She might have said, "Two and two make five, don't they, Charlier?" He would have answered only, with all his usual gentle composure, "Four, Miss Hyde."

As they set off on the mosaic expedition it was evident that they were not of one mind. Amy wanted to have it over and get to business; the press of sightseeing was more that than pleasure to her on her first travels. She devoted herself to

pictures with the same conscientiousness that a merchant might expend on his ledger; her one fear was that she should be asked if she had seen something and be obliged to say "No." So, with ill-repressed zeal chafing within her, she kept always in advance, taking no notice of the halts her sister-in-law made at irrelevant shop-windows, or, if called upon to stop, standing still in the middle of the sidewalk and waiting ostentatiously. Mrs. Hyde, on the other hand, was so blissful at having a day for herself at last, and so determined to enjoy it, as to be only partially conscious of a disturbing element. When it occurred to her that Amy was in a "dreadful hurry," she took a dozen steps with great determination as fast as she could, only to slacken speed by degrees, and then come to a dead stop before a window full of pretty trifles in Parian marble. Mr. Hyde strolled beside her, looking cheerful and helping out the sense of motion by flourishing his cane, but his cheerfulness arose in part from an occult plan which he cherished of giving the ladies the slip later. He had heard something said about straw hats and baskets, which are another specialty of Florence, and thought that at that stage of the shopping he might pretext the banker's and the reading-room, and, in short, get *his* day "out" too. Charlier, with no designs or preoccupation of his own, devoted himself to forming a

connecting link in the straggling procession. It was always difficult for Amy to rein in her springing steps to even the quickest waddle that her sister-in-law could keep up, and so, lest the young lady of the party should appear quite unprotected—which naturally to him, as a Frenchman, was preposterous—Charlier had formed the habit of following her.

Mrs. Hyde's was in general a simple nature; in most circumstances of life her friends could calculate with confidence on her actions, but once engaged in the process of shopping the workings of her mind became mysterious and unfathomable for even those who should have known her best. Only Amy, through long practice, was aware what she had to expect.

"You think that is the handsomest, Henry? So should I, only the setting to this is decidedly newer." And then, placing the morocco cases in question side by side, Mrs. Hyde leaned back in the luxurious arm-chair which she occupied to take a comprehensive view of both, and relapsed into silence. Everything in the shop had been laid out on the counter before her; during the better part of an hour she had examined each set with the utmost minuteness, and now it was impossible to think otherwise than that the decisive moment had come. Impressed by the importance of the choice, Mr. Hyde stood behind

her, rapt also in mute contemplation; the jeweler and his assistants paused; expectation pervaded the establishment.

"These earrings are something like Clara Parkes'," said Mrs. Hyde at last; and that was the end of it. She had been all the while discovering a family likeness in mosaics—of making up her mind not the slightest idea. She now drew some of the other things toward her, and began to recomment on their merits and demerits, as if the particular two had never had any special claims. It was trying. Amy's interest in the pretty ornaments had lasted until it was clear which medallion would look best at her white throat; she had a quick eye and a sure one, and in ten minutes she knew what she meant to take, only she was too wise to say so. It would have complicated her sister-in-law's difficulties of decision to an extent that would have obliged them to seek another shop; for after she had picked out the handsomest, of course Nelly could not be satisfied with what was left, so she merely promised herself to return and get the locket she wanted at some convenient season, and then used all the little wiles at her command in favor of everything else.

The English speaker was not there, and Mr. Hyde could enjoy saying "*Molto bello*" and "*Quanto questo?*" as frequently as he chose. Still, it was to Charlier that the jeweler turned when he had any-

thing especially at heart. He took him, as he was often taken, for one of the party—for some foreign acquaintance perhaps; at all events, for the person most open to conviction through Italian eloquence—for in courteous speech he was continually begging the *signore* to tell the lady this or that, to cause the gentleman to observe how exquisite was the workmanship, etc., etc. And Charlier, without appearing to notice the slight misunderstanding, discreetly performed his usual part of interpreter. Even that became unnecessary in the end, for the English-speaking clerk arrived on the scene, and thenceforward his was the chief personality.

"You find something what you like?" he inquired, beaming with that happy sense of being a boon to humanity which the man who can "spick Engliss" always rejoices in; and, seeing directly how matters stood, he whisked away several handfuls of the cases, as if to make room for something new, and, after opening and shutting various drawers, brought them back again in triumph as fresh specimens. Mrs. Hyde and he got on charmingly together; and that no doubt caused her brother to take pity on Amy's impatience. He saw, moreover, a museum on the horizon from which there was no escape but through a stroke of diplomacy, and feeling pretty sure that his wife would let him off at least as easily as his sister would, he steered clear of Charybdis in

this fashion: "I'll tell you what, Amy, if you are in such a fidget to get to sightseeing, go. Charlier can take you somewhere; we don't need him here now, and—a—I can't myself go anywhere to-day. I must look in at the bank by and by."

It was not an offer to be rejected. Amy set off for the Belle Arti directly under Charlier's guidance. What she thought when she got there might to her greater credit be left untold, but for the sake of truth it must be recorded that of the priceless treasures of art in that collection she called some of the most priceless, in her late school-girl parlance, "awful sights." She called them that to herself, however, knowing how ignorant it was in her to think so; and no one who saw her standing before some solemn-eyed creation of Cimabue need have imagined what was in her secret heart. Up to that time, beauty, for her, had been embodied in two or three girlish faces, chiefly no doubt in the one that looked at her out of the glass when she tied the lace scarf that was to set off a pink-and-white complexion to the best advantage. It was not very surprising if, after her first introduction to certain "masters,'" she wondered during the scarf-tying process whether if she had had red eyelids and puffy cheeks she must of necessity have been better-looking, or, had her neck been as long as a certain Simonetta's, if she would have deserved to be

painted for future generations and called *bella* to the end of time. She took it all literally in her downright simplicity; her mythological tenets were too strict to admit of any Venus not absolutely perfect; severer than a practiced art-critic, it never occurred to her to make allowance for human endeavors; "purity of design," "delicacy of motive," "breadth of conception," she had not so far been called upon to search out in the study of beauty as exhibited by the before-mentioned New England school-girls. It should count for a great deal in the face of these adverse circumstances that she had arrived unaided at the conclusion that beauty in art is more than skin-deep—that she recognized her own unappreciativeness for ignorance, and longed to get joy, as she saw others do, from even occult loveliness. And then all pictures did not bore her; some she sincerely and boldly admired, knowing by the names that she was right; others she liked, but timidly, fearing they might be unworthy of such tribute; and so on, through various grades, to indifference and to the amazement which the "sights" at the Belle Arti occasioned her.

The gallery was almost deserted except for copying-artists, many of whom turned from Fra Angelico's saints and angels to study life as represented by two young persons who conscientiously made the tour of the rooms. They looked most at

Amy of course, though Charlier carried a recommendation with him—if not by reason of any peculiar beauty of feature, at least by the agreeable general effect of a dark, pensive head. It was a pleasing exterior, without being so striking as to induce an examination in detail. A well-dressed man whose brown eyes inspired confidence was the impression that he made, the "well-dressed" conveying, however, not the remotest idea of a dandy. His carefully-brushed coat was of a fashion two or three years back; the little strips of linen at his throat and wrists could not have been whiter; but all that precise neatness was plainly a personal trait, the gift that some fortunate mortals possess of looking always as if fresh from a bandbox.

To say what impression Amy produced is a more difficult matter. That she was a very handsome young lady it did not require an artist to observe. Whether she was to be called very haughty also depended upon circumstances; if one happened to see that delicate cameo-like face, framed with its halo of bright hair, upturned in serene and silent contemplation, there was something unapproachable about it; but the next moment, when she glanced toward her companion and spoke, the impassibility vanished, the merest movement of the lips sufficed to bring a sudden sweetness and animation to the fair, still features. Charlier perfectly understood the air

with which she gazed around her. People seldom travel together for even a few months without coming to learn each other's expression. He knew that Miss Hyde was not half so proud as she looked and that her excessive serenity of demeanor at that moment arose from the fact that she did not know what to make of Cimabue. A certain sort of pride she had, indeed, that he could comprehend. A clever girl on the way to become something more may be sensitive about having her inferiority brought home to her.

He stood beside her for some minutes before he said, "Strange that this should once have been the very utmost a painter could express of loveliness and majesty!"

"Very strange."

It was then that one of our artists, staring with the childlike abandon that Italians never appear to outgrow, experienced a sudden revulsion of feeling. She was not marble after all!

To perceive that raptures were not required set Amy at ease. She was prepared then to follow on to Giotto, and, at her companion's suggestions, to trace the wrestlings of genius with itself, until the great almond-shaped eyes looked as if they might turn, the muscles had become flexible and the first fold of drapery fell free.

It is not the intention of this story to repeat what

Charlier said about the pictures; without the pictures themselves what he said could have little interest; and, in any case, it must be confessed that he did not say it in the language properly befitting the topic. He expressed himself clearly and as one who felt what he was talking about, but he used none of the terms and phrases that are inevitably heard in a conversation on art. Amy was satisfied, and that is all that need be related. It occurred to her that when he got an opportunity he was more loquacious than she had had any idea of, but so far as she was concerned he had talked to good purpose; she had learned something. It had been time more profitably spent than when Henry and Nelly and she walked through the galleries, seeking out the numbers that the guide book marked with a star for their peculiar admiration. Charlier was then seldom within speaking distance; when the family was in force he considered his place to be in the background, and if Amy wanted to know anything she had to arrive at it through a series of misunderstandings on her brother's part, who, monopolizing the catalogue and absorbed in his own art-studies, had not a great deal of attention to spare for hers.

"Eh? What? *That!* Oh, I thought you meant the other. That's—somebody's. It's nothing particular."

It was worth twice as much to go with Charlier alone. When they had got down to Perugino, and compared Raphael's early manner with his master's she turned back to her first study, and looked with quite different eyes on what had left her cold before. She could feel now something of the awe that filled the painter's soul five hundred years ago, when his vision of the Madonna turned to majestic rigidity on that wooden panel.

When it happened that they forgot the pictures for a time and touched on other topics, it was Amy who was the chief speaker. She had mentioned Savonarola. Her eyes shone while she spoke of him, as if between the old Reformer and the fair young girl there was some mysterious bond of union. The lamp that long after his death his faithful followers kept aflame before the relics of their leader and master, as before the shrine of a saint, was lighted again in the heart of this little *piagnone* of later days. She had just read his life, and it had affected her as it naturally would any young unprejudiced mind; her imagination was full of it. From Savonarola mastering the common herd of his time, then struggling with it, and finally overborne by it, she came down to the common herd of her own day; and at that point her hearer became especially attentive. No doubt a certain instinct that told her Charlier thought a good deal

of what Miss Hyde said was quite correct. For him, the youngest of his "party" was not necessarily the most foolish. He took her at the point where he found her. It mattered nothing to him that she had only just begun to wear a train to her dress. That circumstance had weight in her own family, where, if she ventured on a too emphatic "*I* think," some one might answer "Do you?" with an amused expression and impertinent inflection of voice; but out of the family she had already learned to take her stand as a young person entitled to opinions of her own, and the charm of finding them listened to with becoming attention was yet fresh enough for her to produce them occasionally with an eye to effect. She was quite sincere in what she said, but at the same time she certainly meant to dazzle a poor benighted European with a glimpse of American freedom when she thus poured out some of her private and particular views: "It is just the same now among little people and in little things. If a young girl goes into a convent her head is turned with religious excitement. If she goes into a public hall and delivers a lecture, I don't know what would be bad enough to say of her. I am only sure that in either case my relatives would consider me a subject for an insane asylum, and would put me there if they could. Fortunately, the laws are somewhat strict in cases of the sort, so I may be

able to follow my tendencies unhindered, whatever they turn out to be. Certainly, I should not be prevented through fear of what any one might say. I have a right to a place in the world when I find it, and if I don't find one to my liking I shall make one if I can. In short, as though I were Savonarola," she said gaily, "I mean to do as my spirit moves me, and let come what will."

"Oh, Miss Hyde!"

She woke to the unpleasing consciousness that she had been carried away by her audience, instead of carrying the audience with her. The two looked for a moment at each other—he with a deprecating, almost pleading expression, she half inclined to be angry.

She had not the air of one whose spirit would prompt her to very terrible things, but then, even if what she said had been but a fancy of the moment, it was very startling. Her place in the world! It must charitably be supposed that she had no idea how it sounded. And to make a place for herself! Who but would feel how much more sweet and womanly it was modestly to wait until a place were offered? Even the courier might say "Oh!" under such circumstances.

Even Charlier! How on earth had it come that she was talking like that with him? Unquestionably, there was a little loftiness in the way she

answered his unlucky exclamation. As it often happens, however, when reproof is intended, the tone and manner of her speech served her better than the actual words: "Not that I have yet decided whether my talent for public speaking would be best devoted to politics or to the pulpit. Women have already distinguished themselves in America in both branches. What is that bell ringing for? Are they closing the gallery?"

On the way down stairs she glanced at Charlier to see how he had taken it, and was rather glad to find that he had taken that, as he did most things, calmly. She herself was now calm also. It was absurd to be angry. There had been nothing but what she might have expected. When she talked to him in that fashion she gave him a right to reply. As to form, it had been a very proper answer. He was not likely to say anything unwarranted. And then, too, she saw what it meant. It was an involuntary protest against Miss Hyde's stepping off her pedestal, and she smiled a little to herself as she forgave him. He, meanwhile, in a fit of absence such as occasionally befell him, would have started off, as they left the building, without even asking where she wished to go, if her stopping had not reminded him of duty. She was looking up and down the street in search of something.

"I saw as we came here—" She ceased, leaving him in suspense. "Where could it have been? It was close by." (Charlier began to look too, without the faintest idea of what she wanted.) "Yes, there he is."

According to the direction of her eyes, *he* was an individual standing in a doorway with something in a large tin pan to sell. It was a sort of brown cake made of chestnut-flour and oil, and peculiarly gratifying to the Italian palate, if one may judge by the large slices bought and consumed at the street-corners. In blissful ignorance of its ingredients, Amy had commented vainly in her sister-in-law's hearing on its resemblance to plum-pudding.

Nelly was amazed at her. For a girl who could be so deplorably old and staid when she chose, such fancies were a scandalous relapse into childishness: "How can you, Amy? You wouldn't really stop and buy that nasty stuff here, in the street?"

In her native land Amy certainly would not have bought anything on the sidewalk. But in Italy, and when it possessed the touching attraction of looking like something "at home," and something so good as plum-pudding, how could she help but yield to the temptation that often assails those in foreign parts to belie their civilized nature? And then eighteen is so full of contradictions that, in spite of Mrs. Hyde's astonishment, it may be as old as the

hills and yet not have attained to the full dignity that a tall, graceful figure represents. It was so little time ago that, arm-in-arm with a girl-friend, Amy had been used to pause at the confectioners' windows!

"It is not very nice, Miss Hyde," Charlier ventured to observe on finally discovering her intentions.

But she was not to be deterred. What did he know of plum-pudding? They crossed the street and entered into negotiations. At the last moment, while Charlier turned over a handful of loose change to find the proper coin, she uttered an exclamation of dismay:

"Not in a newspaper!"

The itinerant vender presented a fine example of arrested activity, with a piece of the dark, heavy-looking pudding poised on his knife and in the other hand a bit of paper which he had fished out of a basket containing a pair of boots among other miscellaneous articles. The paper was intended as a compliment not lavished on his usual customers, and the effect it produced caused him open-mouthed surprise. An expression of disgust is intelligible in every language under the sun. The bargain might never have been consummated if Charlier had not bethought himself of an envelope, which, opened to its full extent, just served to cover the pudding. So much, therefore, was accomplished, but that was

only half. Amy reflected that if she went back to the hotel to eat her improvised lunch the afternoon would be gone and nothing more could be done. She began to reason on the strength of those fatal sayings, "In for a penny, in for a pound," "As well be hung for a sheep as a lamb." In short, having descended so far as to buy the pudding, "Would anybody see me?" she inquired, with the furtive glance of one about to commit an evil action. And the coast being pronounced clear, she took a cautious bite.

Charlier was so intent on observing how she liked it that he quite forgot himself, and laughed aloud at the dreadful disappointment that followed. But then, sobering directly into propriety with "Let me take it, Miss Hyde," he relieved her of the parcel, which, from an innocent bit of pudding that it had been a moment before, suddenly became an incubus such as they know who have ever tried to drop anything without being seen—apparently an easy matter to accomplish, but in fact calculated to give some idea of the difficulty of doing away with the traces of a murder. Ashamed of her purchase, Amy had no wish to have it picked up and restored to her with a polite bow.

"Not just yet," she said; "there's somebody coming up behind." And no sooner had that person

passed than another approached in the opposite direction.

"Could n't it be thrown in at one of these cellar windows?" she proposed. But a paper-capped cook was looking out at the next one, and then, as if the whole neighborhood had agreed to turn into the street, people were in sight on all sides.

"If we were only near the Arno you could drop it into the water, though perhaps even then somebody would put out in a boat and rescue it."

Her silvery laugh came like a bird's singing after each vain attempt to get rid of the detestable dainty. The thing was absurd in itself, and then, almost unconsciously, she gave way to a charm there was in prolonging and commenting on the absurdity. A smile with Charlier was not one of those results of expansion and contraction agreeable to look upon only in so far as they indicate a cheerful frame of mind. Nature had willed that a curve of the lips and a sparkle in the dark eyes should manage between them, without any assistance of crows'-feet or wrinkles, the smile that lighted his thoughtful face with sudden radiance. Children never could resist that look, and older people than children might watch to see it come again. Charlier succeeded at last in thrusting the despised delicacy on a ragged little urchin standing in the gutter, but as often as they glanced back with a natural curios-

ity to see what came of it he was still holding the pudding untasted and gazing after them. It could only be conjectured that he did not, in the end, find it so embarrassing a piece of property as they had done.

"Only, now you are still hungry, Miss Hyde."

When they were all out together a lunch at Doney's was in the order of the day, but alone Amy could hardly go there. Did he know perhaps of some quiet little place, some confectioner's, where she could get a cup of coffee? Naturally, he either knew of one or could find one, or possibly—in his official character—evoke one; at all events they presently arrived at such an establishment.

Then, on a sudden, Amy's joyous mood turned into silence. She had her cameo face back again as she sat there waiting to be served. The noble, delicate line of her profile was incompatible with any outward appearance of embarrassment, and yet she was at that moment very much embarrassed withal. Should she or shouldn't she? Was it necessary or not? She had not had the courier quite to herself before. It was always Mr. Hyde who had the responsibility of treating him as a man and a brother in his position might expect to be treated—a position not exactly that of a servant in the case of a man like Charlier, and yet not exactly anything else, even though it were Charlier. "We have got

what we want," her brother would say on any occasion like the present, "now you had better look out for yourself." Should she tell him to look out for himself? Or would he do so as a matter of course? In that chilly November afternoon he might need something quite as much as she did, and she would have been sorry to appear totally careless of his comfort. But then neither did she want to be grandly condescending in intimating that he was at liberty to refresh himself in her presence.

The object of these meditations had meanwhile, on his part also, experienced a relapse as he stood by the counter, grave, abstracted, in fixed contemplation of a pyramid of tarts. The weighty decision was taken finally on the spur of the moment; just as the little tray was placed before her Amy glanced up and said:

"You will have something too?"

It was half question and half remark, and if she had thought of it for a week it could not have turned out better. He made a little silent acknowledgment of her courtesy, and presently the woman brought another cup of coffee, which he took standing at the door behind Amy and looking into the street.

In a few moments he set his cup down and came to her with a plate of cakes:

"I think they are the same you used to like in Paris, Miss Hyde."

"Why, yes, so they are! The very things they had at 'Gobble-corner'!" she exclaimed, with naïve satisfaction, helping herself with dainty finger-tips.

An Italian girl who had come into the shop with her mother looked at her wistfully. The confectionery that mamma was mentally doling out to her guests of that evening had not so much interest as the *Inglesi.* (With most Europeans everything that says "Yes" goes under one head.) It must indeed be an envy-awakening sight to one cloistered in the straitness of an Italian household, that swarm of women that yearly sweeps through the land, apparently as free as air,—young or old, pretty or ugly,—all looking, standing, walking, speaking as if the world were theirs. And in this particular instance there was much to envy. How nice to be so fair, to be dressed in the latest fashion, to take cake and coffee with the *sposo!* And how good of the mamma to let the young people go out by themselves! Oh, Heaven upon earth, to be born *Inglese!*

Amy, quite unconscious of the sentiments she excites in a little sallow bit of humanity, fastens her gloves with pretty deliberation, and rising departs like the princess that she is. As they pass Santa

Maria Novella she says she will go in. There are some frescos there, and it is not late.

It is not late, but what daylight there is outside penetrates but faintly through the gorgeous tints of the lofty windows; here and there in the dusk votive tapers sparkle, candles are lighted at one of the altars, where a mysterious murmuring goes on and a little congregation clusters kneeling. Behind the worshipers, who turn their heads at the sound of steps and the tapping of Amy's little heels on the pavement, they enter into a whispered conversation:

"The frescos are in this chapel."

"It is too dark to see anything, and besides, there is this service going on."

"If you came some morning early, Miss Hyde, the light would be better then."

"I will, certainly." Having begun by liking Cimabue, there is no good reason why she should not enjoy Gaddi.

"Do you know what they are singing?"

"The Litany of the Virgin."

"Can you make out the words?"

"Enough for that, and then I know it."

"I will sit down for a little: I like to watch the service."

But he did not sit down. Stepping forward, he

put himself on his knees beside an old woman, who moved her basket to give him room.

It was more his slight, dark figure that Amy watched than the religious proceedings generally. Was he merely improving an opportunity, turning an unoccupied moment to good account, or had he something particular to pray for? When he looked up at the crucifix she wondered what he was thinking, and as he bent his head and made the sign she said to herself, "Does he do that mechanically, or has it a real meaning?" She hoped he had not hurried when he came back to her; he might have stayed as long as he liked; it was more agreeable to sit there than to return to the hotel, where there was nothing in prospect but a stupid evening. She let the very last of the people go out before she moved. They had hardly left the church when, with a little start and exclamation, she drew nearer to her companion. A troop of strange figures had come close upon them at the corner; the long black robes and shrouding veils, with eye-holes through which the wearer might see but not be seen, brushed her as they stepped swiftly by. Four of the masked forms bore an empty litter; the others, in weird procession, followed. They had appeared, passed and were gone, as it seemed, all in a moment.

"The *Misericordia* at last!" exclaimed Charlier, triumphantly. Amy had been on the watch for this

well-known confraternity, a feature of the streets of Florence, ever since her arrival.

"Defend me from Brothers of Mercy in such guise! I could think them servants of the Inquisition sooner, carrying a poor tortured wretch."

"The wretches they carry are mostly out of their torture. They are going now to bury some poor person. Funerals in Florence are always in the evening or very early in the morning."

"Horrible!" said Amy, still dwelling on her first impression.

"Not at all, Miss Hyde. Any one with few resources, ill, dying perhaps—a man like me, for instance, a foreigner with no one to care for him—would get a good deal of comfort from one of those black figures at his bedside."

Amy turned and looked at him, struck by what he said so calmly. While they valued him as they did, while he was in their service, and, for the time being, one of themselves, he counted so little on their humanity that if he fell ill he expected them to leave him to what help he could find! He saw directly, himself, what he had said and what she meant.

"You think, then,—" she began.

"No, Miss Hyde—excuse me—I don't think anything that I shouldn't."

She still looked at him, but her face had changed. It was a simple look; it meant pure good-will, and he answered it as simply. Smiling at each other through the twilight, they were at that moment just two young souls exchanging a kindly greeting in a hard world.

II.

SUNDAY was rainy. Mrs. Hyde had a cold to nurse, caught in the Bargello, and, as it was her husband's evident mission to keep her company, only Amy went out. Charlier was to conduct her to the American chapel. She would not let him call a cab, being glad to walk when an opportunity offered, which was seldom, because Nelly, on the contrary, never walked if she could help it. It was rather mist than rain that blew in their faces as they crossed the bridge over the sombre-flowing Arno; still, it made Amy's waterproof cloak damp. Charlier helped her as she slipped it off in the vestibule, but when she turned to take it from him he had laid it over his arm.

"I will keep it for you, Miss Hyde."

She had supposed he would go back, as she would know the way home well enough, but instead

of that he followed her into the church. He took a chair not far behind her, and so placed at the end of a row that even without turning her head she could not help seeing all the while what he was about, and discovered, with no little astonishment, that he appeared as much at home in an Anglican chapel as before a Roman Catholic altar. Presently he was chanting with the rest, "We are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand," precisely as if he belonged in that flock and had never bowed down to carven images in Santa Maria Novella. Through all the hymns and chants she found herself singling out his voice; it was clear, firm, correct, pleasant to listen to, if artistically nothing remarkable. How he had come to be initiated in heretical ways was such a mystery that a good part of the sermon went over her head unnoticed; it was only a severe stricture on some Roman Catholic doctrine that first caught her attention, and made her with a confused feeling of guilt, as if she were accessory to the attack, glance over her shoulder. Her eyes met Charlier's, and she looked away again.

"It was really a pity that you should be rewarded for attending our service by hearing your own Church blamed," she said, as they walked away afterward.

There was a pause before he answered:

"It is natural. You might hear something in our churches that would not seem quite fair."

"This must have seemed very unfair to you. Didn't it?" as he kept silence.

"I— The fact is, Miss Hyde, I didn't hear it at all."

She burst into a merry laugh:

"And I was thinking you might be hurt!"

"That was very kind. But it does happen sometimes that one doesn't hear all the sermon."

"*I* didn't hear it all," she confessed. For really if he had lost that, she had lost everything else.

"What I wonder is, why you went in. And especially why you took any part after you got there," she questioned frankly. She had made up her mind that she would not talk to Charlier any more about herself. She saw it had been a mistake. She had acted like a little school-girl and any one but him might have presumed upon it. But there would be nothing out of the way in inducing him to be communicative. She could not very well now have him with her and never speak, when they had spent such a social afternoon together. And, besides, they all, in their intercourse with him, had adopted a certain familiarity from the first—from the moment that they began to congratulate themselves on having found a treasure.

"I know the Anglican service very well. There is an English church at Lille, and the chaplain's son and I became good friends at school. He used to ask me to spend Sundays at their house, and some of the shorter holidays when I was not going home. Then I went to church with them, and so I learned your chants and hymns and know all your prayers."

"And it was then you learned to speak English so well, no doubt. But were not your parents afraid you would fall into bad ways among heretics?"

"I imagine they thought little about it, and the director of the school was an easy, liberal-minded man who felt no call to interfere with my pleasure. It was indeed a great happiness to go home with my friend. They were all very kind to me. I owe them a great deal; and though you may think, Miss Hyde, that I ought to regard Protestants with distrust," he said, with a little flashing smile, "I shall always remember my friend's family as some of the best people I have ever known."

"I am glad, I am sure. I only thought that as a Roman Catholic you were bound to disapprove of them and to consider them eternally lost."

"Oh no; I am by no means bound to decide what may be their future state. I am not even bound to think anything about it. Indeed, Catholics can have no reasonable reproach to make to convinced

Protestants who have never been taught in the faith which the Church holds."

"Of course not, but do they all think so? Or is it that you are not quite so good a Catholic as you should be?" she asked, playfully.

"It is not for me to say that I am as good as I should be; I can only affirm that I was properly taught, and that I began well. I learned my catechism from an excellent man, and often served the mass for him."

"You did not live in Lille?"

"No, my home is a little village in the Ardennes. But there was no suitable school there."

"Your parents intended you to have a good education?"

"My parents did not provide it. My education was given me by some one else, at least in great part."

It was said as if he did not mean to be ashamed of it, and that, she thought, justified her in trying to learn something more:

"Tell me about it. I am sure it is a story, and I should like to hear one."

The behest was accompanied by such a smile as is not often resisted. And then, was it not his business to do her pleasure? And when her pleasure was to take an interest in his affairs he could but be flattered. Still he hesitated:

"It would be an uninteresting story, Miss Hyde."

"It will be better than nothing."

"But too long. I should have to begin a great way back."

"Oh, that is no matter. Begin at the beginning."

To write "I was born in such a year and such a place" is not difficult, but, ready as most people are to talk about themselves, there are few who would be entirely prepared to dash into their autobiography *viva voce*. And Charlier was a modest man. However, the beginning once made, he told what there was to tell without faltering or delay, willing to please Amy in that as in anything else. He related for the most part concisely, only entering into detail when so his simple facts better answered to the "story" she had wished to hear.

His father, he said, had been a forester in the employment of a nobleman who owned the woods and lands around their village, and he himself and the count's son had been companions and playfellows when the family came to the *château* to pass the hunting-season. The little viscount was slight and delicate, and, though they were of the same age, the forester's boy had the advantage physically.

"The spirit was not wanting," said Charlier. "He continually tried to do the things I did, but if he climbed a tree he had no strength to shake the nuts down, and though he wandered outward

through the forest as far as I cared to go, he was always tired on the return. However, his father liked him to be with me, thinking it a good change from Paris and a grandmother's careful nursing. the count himself was a great hunter and a friend to all athletic sports, and wanted his son to grow up to share his tastes.

"We made our first communion together, Maurice and I, in the village church; and he received at that time two handsome presents, such as I, of course, could not aspire to—a gold watch from his grandmother and a gun from his father. A pretty little gun it was, with his initials on a silver plate, and his father promised to take him out on the first hunt. They hunt the wild boar in the Ardennes, you know, Miss Hyde—a dangerous sport sometimes—but of course the count never meant Maurice to have any other part in it than the excitement of making one of the party. The *château* was full of guests during the hunting-season, and the forest, so silent all the year besides, was then alive with sound. They stationed us children in a safe place, where nothing was expected to pass; the count went off to his post, and my father, who always had his hands full on such occasions, went away too, telling me to have a care of my companion. I suppose he thought he might do himself a mischief with the gun. Maurice had let me handle and fire it before while he

was learning how to use it, but naturally that day, on his first hunt, he would not give it out of his hands; that would have been more than human generosity. So we waited there, hearing the dogs baying in the distance and shots cracking a long way off, until our expectation was worn out, and then suddenly there was a crushing and rushing in the wood. I saw the bushes move, and shouted, 'A boar! a boar!' Maurice fired his gun at haphazard, and the creature burst out of the thicket the next instant, making straight at us. Remembering my father's injunction, but without any settled purpose, I sprang toward my companion, and down we went together, he under and I uppermost, and the boar away over us, giving me a dig in the shoulder as he passed.

"A wound from a boar's tusk is no slight matter sometimes; I was ill for weeks afterward, and made much of by everybody. I still remember the daily visits of the doctor and the nice things that came down from the *château*. Then, finally, when I was up again, and just as the count was on the point of departure, he sent for my father and me. I knew they said I had saved the little viscount's life, though, as I have confessed, I had no heroic intentions at the time; but of course I supposed I was going to be rewarded, and somehow or other I was

firmly convinced that the reward would be a gun, just such a one as Maurice had.

"It was a little embarrassing when we were ushered into the count's presence, to find myself the object of general attention; however, for the sake of the gun, I was ready to endure anything. The old countess sat in an armchair and looked at me, the count made me a speech of which I heard very little, and even Maurice did not help me to put a good face on the matter; for there, standing beside his grandmother, surrounded by a luxury that was strange to me, and alluded to with solemnity as 'my son,' he became quite another boy from the one whom I ordered about in my domains in the woods like a younger brother. I used to call him by his Christian name, and we said *thou* to each other as if we were quite on an equal footing. All the while the count was talking I looked about as much as I dared to see where the gun was coming from; and if you ever had a dreadful disappointment in your childhood, Miss Hyde, I need not try to say how I felt when it became evident that it was not coming at all. To be told I was going to school would not have given me great pleasure under any circumstances, but just then it was an aggravation, and, if I remember rightly, my father got nothing out of me but a very sulky '*Merci*' when he endeavored to

nudge and push and scold me into thanking the count for his great kindness."

Charlier stopped in his narrative to smile at the recollection. "And for all that, I am sorry—I am almost sorry yet—that I didn't have the gun."

"*I* am—very sorry indeed," said Amy, heartily. "People are so stupid with children sometimes!"

"And they are sure to think it is the children who are stupid, unless, as in my case, my want of proper gratitude was charitably explained as regret at going from home."

"So that is how it was? I knew it would be a story, and I like *your* part in it exceedingly. But you were happy at school?"

"Oh yes, I was happy."

That was not enough. There was more that she would like to know, and, as if he felt it, he began again: "Everything did not go as it was meant to, however. I had been four years at school when the count was killed by an accident. Maurice, who had always remained delicate, did not survive him long, and his cousin and heir who succeeded to the property had naturally no interest in finishing what the old count had begun in my behalf. Still, my father would not let what I had gained be lost for want of a sacrifice on his part, and he devoted a sum that had been slowly laid by for old age to the completion of my studies. With the utmost

economy it would have taken me through a university, and he relied on being repaid by means of the position that education would give me. But there came a terrible blow. Only a year later in a financial disaster, his little savings were swept away, and it was more than he could bear; he died of the loss. So at seventeen I was thrown upon my own resources for getting a living, and not only that, but my mother was wholly dependent on me also. Of course the question immediately was how I could earn most. In thinking what I should like to do when my studies were over I had said to myself, 'Either a chemist or a traveler.' The latter fancy was probably only awakened by reading books of famous explorers; I doubt if I should have had the energy to do much in that way, and, besides, it was folly, for I was utterly without means to enter on such a career. And perhaps the other idea was almost as foolish, for the profession of chemistry, unless one attains to a high position, is not lucrative, and in any case it must have been a good while first. Still, discoveries in the laboratory would, I think, have been more to my mind, and of quite as much importance as any I could have made at the ends of the earth. My father wanted me to study law, and if only I had had the taste for it I see that he would have been right, for the law is a step toward any position. However, neither what

he wished nor what I wished was to be, though, oddly enough, the first two roads that opened to me bore a nominal resemblance at least to those I had contemplated. The chaplain was a good friend to me in need, and it was through him and by his advice that I became a courier. He would, he said, recommend me for a place at the English chemist's in Lille; but then that was not chemistry as I had meant it, and until I knew my business I should earn as good as nothing, whereas if I chose to travel through Europe with an elderly couple, relatives of his who had asked him to find them a courier, my pay would be considerable, and, having no expenses of my own, it could all go to my mother's support. With English and French at command I was prepared to enter on a courier's duties, and a certain aptitude for acquiring languages would help me to pick up the rest on the way. The fact that they were personal friends of the chaplain's with whom I was to travel was a great inducement, because for his sake they would put up with my inexperience. My kind friend showed me too that not only could I learn much through the mere travelling, but I need not wholly give up my studies either. I should have more or less time to myself, and there would always be room for a book or two in my portmanteau. His advice coincided with my own opinion, and I have had no

reason to regret the step I took. It has already enabled me to put my mother beyond the reach of want for the rest of her life, and that is all she would ever let me do for her. She is very simple in her habits, and so wedded to old ways that nothing would induce her to change her mode of living for another, no matter how much better or easier."

"I am glad you have succeeded so far," said Amy. "But you have not given up all the rest? You should do something for yourself now; you must begin to think of chemistry again."

"Ah, that I don't know;" and he closed his lips with so evident an intention not to enter on the topic that Amy said no more. As they walked on silently she was trying to picture him a little scrubby peasant-boy, and the side glance that she cast did not help her imagination in the least; the dark, well-moulded features betrayed his descent from a Latinized race, but nothing more: they might have sprung as well from the castle as the cottage. Then she fell to thinking how but for that chance a dozen years ago he might, instead of walking with her, have been taking his Sunday pleasure lounging in a round-shouldered heap at the door of some cabaret, smoking a black pipe and drinking Heaven knows what.

"Why, Amy Hyde!" cried two or three girlish voices as though the skies were about to fall. A

bevy of familiar faces came toward her, the father and mother smiling in the rear, and as the circle closed in all the questions that "people from home" ask each other followed in quick succession: "Where have you been?" "Where are you going?" "What hotel are you at?"

Charlier stood at a little distance, and when they all moved on together he still kept aloof, wondering probably if he were further wanted. Amy saw there was something to be done, and turning to him she said, "If you get back to the hotel first, will you please tell my brother I have met some friends and they will come in with me?"

While she spoke Charlier became the center of observation for half a dozen pairs of eyes, and as he lifted his hat and turned away there was a collective inquiry, "Who is that?" and at the answer, a chorus, "The *courier!*"

III.

"THAT man is much too young and good-looking for her to be out alone with him continually. It is astonishing how her friends can allow it," people said, who were at the same hotel with the Hydes in Rome. They were speaking of Amy and the courier,

but they exaggerated the matter. It was not "continually" that she went out with him. Now and then Mr. Hyde took a holiday, and his wife had visits to return; then Amy, who would hear nothing of social duties, was obliged to go sightseeing without them. That Charlier accompanied her was too much a matter of course for them to give it a moment's consideration. It would have been their turn to be astonished and scandalized at the idea of his youth and good looks being a subject of precaution on Amy's account. It would have been an insult to her and an injustice to him. For what reason was there to assume that he would forget himself, when he had never once departed from the attitude of a man who "knew his place"? Not once, either with them or with Amy alone. The whole world might have heard what they said to each other during those *tête-à-têtes* that were considered so unseemly. But, for all that, there was something in it, and Amy was perfectly aware of it.

It was a fancy of hers always to have a little bunch of violets, and every morning, as they went out, Charlier bought it for her at a stand in the square. There was nothing in that as a simple fact. He frequently bought things for all of them, and it was understood that he kept a reckoning of such expenditure and brought it in from time to time. "Four

soldi—that makes one *lira* forty *centesimi* a week," Amy reflected. "'Violets for Miss Hyde, 1.40.'" Sometimes there were no flowers in the square, but Charlier did not forget them; a little later he would come up to her and say before her brother and Nelly, in the simplest way in the world, "Here are your violets, Miss Hyde." And she would take them and put them in her buttonhole. What could be more natural than that? Nothing—if only the "1.40" had been down in the account. But Amy was as sure it was not there as if she had looked over her brother's shoulder while he was settling up. He himself rarely took the trouble to examine the different items; no mistakes were to be expected in Charlier's neat papers, and as Amy could think of nothing better under the circumstances than to keep her surmises to herself, the violets continued to nestle at her throat and send up their sweet, faint fragrance all day long.

They went one moonlight night to the Colosseum. What is called in certain circles the "Sardinian occupation" had not then taken place, and the great amphitheater was still undisturbed in its ruined beauty. Ivy clustered where it listed; bold shrubs, "catching a footing on some jutting ledge, shook their blossoms in mid-air;" tiny flowers sprang in the crevices, and everywhere bits of verdure met the sight, while admirers of all this picturesque neglect

risked their necks climbing by crumbling steps to the upper portions of the structure. The Italians were hardly established in Rome before, seized with a fury of "spring cleaning," they had torn away all the green, picked out every little bit of moss, scraped the old stones to the last degree of polish they were capable of assuming, and mended the yawning gaps in the stairways. No doubt it was undertaken from the best of motives, as spring cleanings generally are; no doubt they had reason to say, as people do who take possession of a house from which a neighbor has just departed, "*Such* a state of things!" But for all that, and though the vines were fretting away the stones they clothed with loveliness, the eye regrets them still. Amy saw the place in its beauty, and she went up and down the uneven, broken steps, where her little foot sought cautiously for a safe spot to tread. The floods of silver light that streamed around made the shadows only the deeper, and she hesitated and stopped at last on an interminable descent; the others were going down ahead, their voices receding continually, but she could not pass a great chasm that imagination opened before her.

"If you give me your hand, Miss Hyde, you will find it easier."

Charlier was close by. She held her hand toward him, and his firm clasp, and the feeling that his arm

was like a bar of iron to support her if need were, restored her confidence; she followed him as if they had been descending a lighted staircase. The moment they were on level ground he loosed his hold; if he had not done so he would have been no longer Charlier; if he had pressed her fingers ever so slightly he would have been a common, vulgar man. And yet what would he not have given to prolong the need for his assistance only a little! It was again a mysterious intuition that told her that.

Ever since they had been in Rome her passion for seeing and understanding and fathoming had been on the increase. It was as if her soul were in it, and fatigue a thing unknown to body or brain. Church after church and gallery after gallery,—she was ready for everything, to the great despair of some who went with her and did not like to give in that they were beaten. But, though she was anxious to inform herself, and to learn wherever an opportunity offered, it was really that strange, sweet, intuitive perception more than all the history of republic or empire that gilded the broken walls of Rome with splendor. When the others, half benumbed mentally and physically by a long course of statues in a chilling gallery, threw themselves into the first cab that passed and gave orders, in melancholy resignation, to be driven to their next

task, she leaned in her corner of the little rickety, uncomfortable vehicle, feeling no more than a blissful lassitude, and lost herself in dreamy contemplation of the blossoming almond trees against the azure of a Roman sky. And when the day had been so spent, instead of getting to bed early—which was the ostensible purpose of going to her room—she sat up late, engaged in nothing more profitable than asking herself questions. "Am I a fool?" was one of them. Had there crept into her composition, from the same source whence her unlucky uncle had drawn his, some mysterious leaven of folly that prevented her from seeing things as others saw them? Was she inevitably destined to meet the world against the current, and to encounter a series of disappointments that everybody but herself could foretell? "Poor girl!" she heard them saying; "she will be wretched." And why? Would she be wretched because he was peasant-born, a courier and a foreigner? Or would she be happy because, rising above the disadvantage of his birth, he knew more than those who might mention it slightingly? Because, in an inferior position, he respected himself and made others respect him? Because, though of another race than hers, he was upright and courageous and gentle? And then, finally, if he were all that, would it suffice for happiness? That was the only question, after all. "They" might say

he was an adventurer who wanted her fortune, and who would scatter it to the winds. Let them say their worst; she knew better than that. But there was wretchedness possible even if he did not waste her money. What if her own fancy—not he—were deceiving her? What if it proved that they were more dissimilar in habits and tastes and feelings than she had any present means of knowing? Her nightly reflections used to close with resolves to be on her guard against herself, to listen like a grand inquisitor and watch for the slightest indication that he was not what she had thought him.

Charlier gave her full opportunity to make such observations. He related with perfect frankness any circumstances of his life that incidental conversation might call up—perhaps with the secret purpose of making himself feel more fully the width and depth of the gulf there was between them, certainly with no idea that simple, honest words might build a bridge on which a brave girl would dare to cross. She had told him once that she would do what was for her own happiness, and never mind the world, but he had found nothing very encouraging to say on that occasion.

One day she asked what he had thought of all the people whom he traveled with. Were they agreeable or not?

"Most of them were," he said. "I sometimes think the world, according to my experience, has been maligned. The Fates have been unkind to me in certain ways, but I cannot, in reason, complain of my fellow-men. I have met with charming characters among them, and they are few of whom I can remember absolutely nothing pleasant."

"But some there are, then?"

"Some there are."

"And disagreeable people on their travels are always doubly disagreeable. I wonder you had the patience to get on with them."

"I did n't get on," he said calmly. "When I found that we could not understand each other, if—if they —in short, when it was evident that we should be better apart, we parted company at once."

She guessed what he could not bring himself to utter; if they were little-minded and suspicious, if they insinuated dishonesty. She could fancy how they saw the quiet face change. No half-excuses, no little soothing speeches, would mend matters then. They parted company *at once*, and she was glad of it.

"But I have known very charming characters, too," he repeated. "The kindness of the old couple, the first people I ever traveled with, I shall never forget. And I put them to the proof. There was one dreadful mistake I made."

"What was it?" asked Amy, quickly. Perhaps it was a mistake from which she might learn wisdom.

"We had been up the Rhine as far as Mainz, and from there we were to go to Speyer. Some friends of the major's—he was a retired Indian officer—had advised him by all means to visit the Speyer cathedral. So I bought the tickets, and we took the train. But, unluckily, in the compartment where I was sat a lot of people who meant to get out at Worms, and who were talking of the cathedral there. I listened to them until, with the aid of considerable absent-mindedness, it became firmly fixed in my head that that was the cathedral *we* were going to see. So we no sooner reached Worms than I jumped out and went to the major's carriage with the welcome intelligence that we had arrived. They got out too, surprised at the shortness of the journey, but unfortunately not remarking on it at the time, and we made our way out of the station. And just as we did so, and I heard the train start again, it flashed upon me what I had done. 'There's the omnibus of the Hotel d'Angleterre,' said the major. It was the hotel he had been recommended to, and of course there is one of that name in every place. In we got and drove off. I wondered they did not *feel* there was something wrong; it seemed as if they might see 'WORMS' in letters a yard long on all the

buildings as they looked out of the omnibus-windows. But they had not the slightest suspicion. They both observed what a comfortable-looking house it was as we stopped, but it was more like a tomb to me than anything else. Then they dined, which I can't say I did, and directly after we were to go to the cathedral. I found the major in the hall, with the head-waiter explaining to him, in his best English, how he must go down the street and turn to the right. The only excuse I can make for allowing the thing to go on so long is that there was really nothing to be gained by telling; we could not get on again until night, at any rate. And then when the revelation was made I was ruined, and people always stave off ruin as long as they can. I felt that I had proved myself utterly incapable of what I had undertaken, and that there was an end of my earning my living. However, once we reached the cathedral I knew it must come out, and I can remember now with pity for a miserable boy—I was only seventeen then—the feeling with which I stood first a little aside by myself. I learned from that experience how a condemned man says his prayers, Miss Hyde. When I went back to the major he had his book open and was reading, 'On the right of the main entrance is a remarkable monument,' and then gazing about vainly in all directions. I took my courage with both hands, as we say, and burst out:

'Major, you are not in Speyer.' He thought I was out of my mind at first, and his wife's little old face, with its pretty white curls, looked quite frightened. It was only after explanation that they began to believe it, and then, as the ridiculous side of the affair occurred to the major, though struggling with himself out of respect for the sanctity of the place, he laughed as I had never seen him laugh before. The end of it was that they liked the cathedral so much and found the town so interesting that we stayed until the next night. All they lost was the price of the tickets on to Speyer, and they gained a sight of Worms, and—if that counts for anything—a boy's admiring respect for their conduct under trying circumstances. They saw how I felt, and never reproached me with my stupidity nor alluded to it afterward. The dear old lady would look a little anxious sometimes, wondering naturally enough whether I was attending to my business or dreaming, and then I always took occasion to set her mind at rest by saying that I had the tickets or had seen the luggage off or done whatever was the affair in hand. It taught me something. I am absentminded still, I fear, but I have never undertaken anything of consequence since without warning myself to keep my senses about me."

It taught Amy something too. It told her that his was no mere varnish of fine feeling. He had been

the same from the first. When half a child he could divine an old lady's thoughts and anticipate her wishes, just as he did hers now.

At another time he spoke of his mother, and something that Amy said betrayed an idea which he felt obliged to set right.

"My mother is a peasant, Miss Hyde, and has never thought of being more than that. She knows nothing from books and nothing of the world. A little house and a bit of land are world enough for her. And work enough too; she does everything with her own hands."

There was a pause, but he was still thinking, for Amy noticed how he looked at *his* hands, smooth and well kept, as they lay together loosely on his knee.

"Old people are often like that," she said. "They have too much pride and energy to spare themselves."

"Yes; my mother never will give up anything while she has strength for it; and thank Heaven! she has strength yet."

"You seldom get a chance to go home, I dare say?"

"Between one engagement and the next I make a chance. And I assure you, Miss Hyde, that little village is not the least remarkable thing I see on my journeys. Its changelessness has something impres-

sive, and after hurrying about the world I feel half inclined to step softly and speak low when I find myself there."

"Is it pretty, your village?"

"You would call it an 'awful' place."

"How do you know?" rather sharply.

"Well, perhaps you would n't. I was only thinking of the miry lane that leads to my mother's house, and of some neighborly pigs that thrust their snouts under the fence and grunt as I go by. I should be surprised to find the lane anything but dirty, and should miss the salutation of the pigs if they failed to greet me; but I fancied you might consider their civilities unnecessary and feel compassion for your boots."

"And what should I think of your house?"

"You would say '*Here?*' when I told you that was where my mother lived."

"I am not at all sure of that. I rather like a little, old, picturesque house."

"And a little old house that is not picturesque?"

She laughed and turned her head away; "At least, I might like it inside better than out."

"Oh no. You would say: 'Open the windows; I shall stifle!' And there are few of them, and they are very small; I am afraid you *might* stifle, Miss Hyde."

Her lips smiled still, but her eyes looked thoughtful under their silken lashes.

"And your mother? You won't tell me that I should say anything about her?"

"No," he answered, gently, "for if you had any impression that was not pleasing you would not speak it, I am sure."

"And I am sure I should have no such impression."

"At all events, my imagination of what you might think goes no further. The straggling houses, the village inn, the little church with its noisy bell,—I know how these might strike a stranger, but within my own doors I am at a loss. It is difficult for me to suppose that any one could be in contact with my mother and not feel something of what I feel for her, and yet there are distances that even sympathy cannot traverse. People may have much in common, and be too far apart to find it out. I have told you my mother is a peasant, Miss Hyde. You don't know what that is, to be sure."

There was a break in the conversation, though Amy's thoughts still lingered in the same place, as was evident when she spoke again:

"Can one see your house from the train?"

"You don't suppose we are on the railway, Miss Hyde?"

"Aren't you? I thought perhaps. How do you get there, then?"

"By walking two hours from the station. That is the only way I know of. Possibly something on wheels might be found to take one, but I doubt if anybody ever wanted to go to the village who could not walk—except people for the *château*, and of course carriages are sent for them."

"At least the *château* is fine?"

"I regret to say that it is in the same category with the houses—old, and yet not very picturesque. The forest, however, is really beautiful. Nature has, as usual, done better than man, and except for a few wood-roads and paths to other villages she is left in undisturbed possession; she and I, that is, have it to ourselves, for I may call it *my* forest, since I am the only person who goes there simply to enjoy it. There is no hunting now; the present owner does not care for it and never comes to the *château*."

"So that from the outer world you are the only visitor. You must create a great sensation. Don't the people run to their doors to look at you?"

"And ring the church bell to announce my arrival?" he asked, laughing. "There certainly is one house where I create a sensation, especially if I give no notice beforehand. And any novelty I bring is fully appreciated there. It is sad to think, Miss Hyde, how even with a mother 'dress makes the man;' mine looks me all over for anything that she

has not seen before, and then says, 'So that is what they wear now?' I used to try, at first, to explain that 'they' and I were not always dressed alike, but seeing that she wished to regard her son as a model of fashion, I gave it up, and am always glad now when I have to buy a new hat before I go home." He said it with a little tender smile that not every son knows how to keep for his mother's loving weaknesses.

It was nothing more extraordinary than this that they found to talk about when they were alone together; still, the fact that they talked at all, or that, instead of pictures or statues, they discussed an ugly little house in the Ardennes, might have given Amy's family the alarm could they have known it. It would have been too late. What were churches, galleries or palaces to Amy now? She was dreaming of a cottage far away, and of a woman who lived there as proud as any queen. She saw the dark, small room with its homely furnishings, the tiny casement-windows that barely let in light and air, and then the mother in her peasant's cap and kerchief looking up at her tall son and glorying in his stateliness. Amy was never weary of conjuring up the scenes of such a visit home. What joy for his mother to go to church with him beside her! She might be pious and devout, but her son was her saint that day. She might be a peasant

among peasants; she still was conscious of the courtesy which never betrayed by word or look that anything seemed small or had grown strange; and she felt, no doubt, though finding no expression for it, the tact with which he wore his finer cloth beside their homespun. His mother was sure to be jealous of his dignity, and yet she would be glad his honors sat so lightly that when the men who had known him as a little boy said "monsieur," he would not take it as his due. Not that his kindly remonstrances would be of any use; it would be "Monsieur Charlier" again the next time, but nobody would bear him any grudge for being no longer one of them. Amy saw and heard and felt it all as if she had been there. And who can say she was not? Among those shifting scenes there was one where her fancy lingered longest. Three persons were in the little room; the third was a lady tall and fair in shimmering silk. It was not vanity, for she could picture the lady only as she knew her; nor was it all romance; there were real tears in her eyes when she thought of her holding the worn hands in hers, bending to kiss the wrinkled face and saying "mother!"

For it had come to that. There were no more questions now at night; they had all been answered since she had heard Charlier talk of home. He might describe it as a wretched hovel if he chose, but

only the more did nature's nobleman look out of his brown eyes. It was her character that, once her mind was made up, she never hesitated; and now, in as blissful security as if she held her future in one little hand, she framed and fashioned it as she would, as he and she would like it best. She built a house that consisted of a library and a laboratory, and there "they lived happily ever after." Of course there was the shady side to those bright visions. She knew what must come first—her brother's wrath and Nelly's indignation, the threats and warnings and contempt, the nine days' wonder. For not only her own people would have their say, but there would be those who had never even spoken to her, and who would greet each other in the street with gleeful malice: "Have you heard about Amy Hyde? Had a love affair with the courier! ran away with the courier!"

That last would not be true. There was to be nothing underhand about it; she had not the faintest intention of running away. When it was known, she meant to talk about her marriage as openly as if it were the one thing desired by all her friends, and to make her preparations without the slightest concealment. How soon it would be known her maiden meditations never revealed to her. She was happy so; it was happiness to see and hear him, to have him near her, but she knew a day must come when a

word would change everything, and then she would be ready. She had decided what she had to say; she had measured the ground she stood on. When her brother armed himself with his guardianship and refused consent, she had only to remind him that her native state permitted her to marry whom she chose at eighteen; that was a bit of information she had picked up when it was of no particular use to her, but which she turned now to good account. While the law pronounced her to have reached all the discretion she was likely to attain to, nothing material was to be gained by calling her a fool. Money entered but slightly into her calculation; she did not know whether or not they could keep her out of her property until she was twenty-one; nor did she greatly care. What she had always had for herself would be left her, no doubt, and a sum that furnished superfluities for one would cover necessities for two.

It was all perfectly plain and simple. She had nothing to do but be steadfast, and she could be that. And in thinking over what was coming upon her there even sprang up a sort of pleasure in the combat. She carried confusion into the hostile camp, and made her enemies grind their teeth in impotency when she answered their railings with barbed arrows of her own disdain. Her brother's family pride would be deeply wounded; she knew it,

and could even understand it—she had family pride herself until she discovered it was nonsense—only, if his pride led him to say outrageous things to her, he would have something to hear in return. She meant to tell him that the man he scorned did not think a great deal of him. She had it on his own authority, for Charlier had made a remark one day which implied as a matter of course that there were no "families" in America. He was only a courier, but when he said "family" he meant something that went back to the Crusades—he meant counts and viscounts. And who were the Hydes, after all? And where were the United States when Jerusalem was taken?

In her own heart she understood Charlier better. If there were no "families" in America for him, he thought her as great a lady as if she had borne the proudest name in France. The man who "knew his place" believed, like any man of education, as little in absolute differences of rank as he believed in the actual existence of a black line called the equator. But, nevertheless, it was too good a shaft to be thrown away, and there was no doubt that her brother would feel it. She meant to defend herself, in short, but magnanimously resolved that a way should always be open toward conciliation. They should have due notice of everything, though she were forced at the last moment to a point-blank

reminder: "Henry, I am going to be married this morning." If he then chose to turn his back on her and answer, "Nothing to me," let him; he might live to be sorry for it. At least her sisterly duties would be brought to a fitting end with that notification.

IV.

"WILL you go to San Pietro in Montorio, Nelly?"

"Why, we were there yesterday!"

"No, that was San Pietro in Carcere."

"Well, then, the day before."

"That was San Pietro in Vincoli."

"Mercy!" But Mrs. Hyde would go to no more San Pietros, not if there were a dozen. She did not intend to kill herself rushing around to see churches that were as like one another as peas.

Such an answer had been anticipated, and Amy merely said, "Then I shall have to go by myself."

The Hydes had found it more convenient not to hire a carriage monthly, but to take one when they wanted it, which was a dozen times a day, and where they found it, which was everywhere, Rome being the city of all others amply supplied with

means of locomotion. The disadvantage of this plan was that Mr. Hyde had sometimes to crouch on a very small third seat if a two-horse carriage were not immediately at hand. But when Amy went "by herself" the tiniest of victorias was as good as the largest landau—better, indeed, for Charlier was near enough to speak to her easily if there was anything to notice on the way. The driver seemed always a little surprised and touched his hat, uncertain whom he had there, when Charlier sprang up beside him. He cast curious glances at the invader, who sat silent and absorbed, with a far-off look in his eyes that he had in common with many a wanderer who has never gone from home. Sometimes, however, Charlier addressed a remark to his companion, and that was quite enough to win his confidence for the rest of the drive. If the man stopped talking occasionally, filling up the interval by snapping his whip, he soon began again, as if drawn by some irresistible attraction to his quiet neighbor; while a look of kindly interest, a smile, a word or two, perfectly sufficed to keep up the conversation on the other side. Amy used to wonder what it was all about, with a little uneasiness, a secret dislike that any one but herself should claim his attention. If the others were there she was aware of what passed on

the driver's seat without appearing to perceive it, but when alone she never hesitated to stem the flood of Italian with judiciously interposed English. And in truth Charlier could then hardly be called neglectful of his office; every broken pillar or piece of cornice or bit of bas-relief incorporated into modern Roman walls he saw and pointed out, for which cause he had continually to turn so that he could see and speak to her.

As they went up to the church by the winding path, marked from space to space by detestable pictures of the Via Crucis, Amy tried to make Charlier say whether or no he believed St. Peter to have suffered on the actual spot they were going to visit. But he took pleasure in returning baffling answers. Her manner toward him had changed from the moment that inward doubts were at an end. Up to that time, whatever happened, there had been the conventional distance between Miss Hyde and the courier; now, on her part at least, there was an assumption of perfect equality as often as they were by themselves. She had with him the tone she would have used to any gentleman of her acquaintance. From him to her there was still a certain restraint, which indeed was broken sometimes—if not in words, at all events in other ways that could not escape her observation. The

happiness that will no more be concealed than grief spoke in his glance or betrayed itself in his very steps—in the slight, unconscious spring he gave from stone to stone, as a child does with a joyous thought in its heart.

"You can talk as much as you please about possibilities and probabilities of oral tradition; I know no better whether *you* believe St. Peter to have been crucified here than I did before."

"I am sorry to be so unsatisfactory," said Charlier, humbly.

"No, you're not; you mean to be just that. You won't say you don't believe it, and you can't say you do."

"In that case my answer is all you could expect."

"But you are not frank."

"And you are, Miss Hyde."

"Am I?"

"Very. You accuse me of insincerity without circumlocution."

"No; I won't say you are exactly insincere, but a little jesuitical. You have the art of putting things without committing yourself. And yet you are no Jesuit, or you would improve your opportunities for converting a person so ready to be instructed as I am. You still owe me your opinion on modern miracles. I have told you what I think of them,

and now I am waiting to be brought over to more catholic views. If I were convinced, I might try whether the waters of Lourdes would cure me of asking questions."

"I will be quite honest now, Miss Hyde, and confess that I have heard of no notable diminution of curiosity since the fountain was opened."

"Oh, if you think it useless I won't try. But to return to St. Peter. You know many Anglicans make a point of believing that he was never in Rome."

"Yes, I know."

"Well?"

"And I don't care."

"Oh! oh!"

"If Anglicans have the charity that St. Peter recommends, I dare say it will cover, among the multitude of their sins, that of believing he never was here."

"You know your Bible!" said Amy, rather surprised.

He laughed: "If you can believe it, Miss Hyde, I will tell you that all Catholics are not wholly ignorant of it."

So she gave him up on that point, and they went into the little round chapel that stands by itself behind the church, and together looked down

through the grating that covers the hole in the ground where St. Peter's cross was or was not, or might have been, planted. To the man who accompanied them Charlier perhaps appeared as good a Romanist as need be, but Amy was pleased to think she had found out some shortcomings. There was nothing in his personal faith that need divide them; St. Peter's charity was wide enough to cover all their differences.

The church possessed little to detain them, and Amy was in haste to be out again, enjoying the prospect that no one who has seen it can ever forget —the far-stretching Campagna, the blue Alban Hills, the Apennines just touched with snow, and then Rome at her feet. She looked long and silently, then said, with a sigh:

"It is almost the last time."

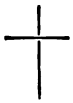
Rome had been so beautiful! If it had depended on her they would never have seen Naples.

"Why, what is this?" she exclaimed suddenly.

The ground around the church on the hilltop is planted with flowers and intersected by paths, with here and there a seat formed of a slab of gray stone supported at either end on a little pile of rocks. In the midst of the flowers and shrubs this singular style of rustic bench has something tomb-like; some one had thought so, for on the one by which they

stood an inscription, traced with pebbles from the gravel-walk, caught Amy's attention:

JEANNE



PAX.

"Isn't it singular?" she said. "But, after all, a distant prospect has often something that inclines to melancholy. On the whole, I don't wonder that Jeanne was remembered here."

"*I* might have thought of her—my little sister Jeanne," said Charlier.

"You had a sister?"

"She died at eight years old, when I was fifteen. I may almost say I have her yet, for when I think of going home from school I always see the child. She was a great pet, and, being so much younger than I, I had a sort of fatherly tenderness for her and felt some of the responsibility of her bringing-up. It was not a difficult task; she had one of those happy natures that find their own even way.

"Hers was the loudest rejoicing when I arrived," he continued, "and from the time that she ceased to be a baby and could share my rambles she never left me. She was a sturdy, high-spirited child, and would have trotted beside me for hours, talking all the while in her little flute voice, if I had not taken

her on my back when I thought she ought to be tired."

"What a sad loss it must have been!"

"It was indeed—a great grief to my parents, and my first real sorrow. Her illness was sudden and short, just before one of my vacations, so that I knew nothing of it and went home expecting to find her. She used to come to meet me on the road as far as a certain great rock; there she waited till I came in sight, and then ran to me with shouts. That time, instead of Jeanne, I found my mother there."

"Oh, how sad!" said Amy, again.

"And yet if she had lived—who can tell?—we might have been farther apart than we are now. Nobody is able to think it at the time, but to make a little cross and write *Pax* may often be, as the world goes, the only way to keep our sweetest recollections. It is a safe seal. I would rather have it so when I think of her living to grow up and—"

Amy finished his thought in her own mind. To her, too, little Jeanne seemed better off than if she had been married to a boor. He could say, "My mother is a peasant" and speak of her toil-worn hands with reverence, but the other tie was looser; the brother and sister might have been swept asunder in the course of years.

"Do you know, I am wondering what your Christian name is," she said, when they had kept

silence for a while. She was seated on one end of the stone bench, and he leaned against the tree that shaded it.

"Michel—my father's name."

"I like that so much! I mean I like a name to have come as an inheritance. Any name, no matter what, so that some of one's kindred are called by it, seems to me better than one that is picked up just because it sounds well. That is the case with mine, unhappily. It was given me that I might be spared Hannah, but I would gladly have been called Hephzibah if there had been any reason for it. Anything but Amy. It sounds so foolish—Amy!"

"*Aimée!*"

It was spoken, the winged word that nothing could recall! And it cost a broken vow and bitter self-reproaches. She knew that, for though he turned away she saw the flush mount first and his fingers clench. "Aimée" had sprung to his lips involuntarily, like an echo startled by her mocking utterance of her own name. But how often he must have called her that in secret!

There was silence. She did not look to see where he had gone. In the first waking to find her dream real she hardly knew what she did nor why she did it. Trembling, half terrified and half entranced, she sprang up and fled down the slope, down into the lower world, but with no more consciousness of the

earth beneath her than if she had been walking on sunset clouds. At the foot she paused, knowing that he had followed at a distance with lingering steps. Slowly he came nearer, nearer, and she would not get into the carriage until he was by her side; then she laid her arm on his, and for one moment—or was it an eternity?—they looked into each other's eyes.

At the hotel a surprise was awaiting Amy. Friends of theirs had arrived unexpectedly from Brindisi, returning from Palestine, and in the Hydes' sitting-room the travelers were relating their adventures clamorously. Of course it was to be accounted a pleasant surprise, but Amy listened rather abstractedly to the haps and mishaps of the journey, the latter chiefly prevailing.

"Most fortunate you didn't go with us, my dear; we've had nothing but trouble from beginning to end. And fearful weather! Fancy your tent blowing inside out in the night and the rain *pouring* down! How we lived through it I don't know. We've all been ill, one after the other, and we've had to leave our courier now in Brindisi in a fever. Poor fellow! I don't suppose he will get over it. The hotel-people were dreadfully frightened, and said it was the plague. Such nonsense! It's nothing but a sort of typhoid fever. However, we got somebody to take care of him, and then, as we could do

no good by staying, we came away to find a little rest and comfort somewhere. I hope you have all been well. I declare, you don't look so. How pale she is! isn't she?"

"You wouldn't wonder if you knew how she has been going on," said Mrs. Hyde. "Out the whole day long ever since we have been in Rome. If *she* doesn't get fever I don't know who will. Henry and I have been more reasonable, but when we won't go with her she is off with Charlier somewhere. I tell her she'll not remember a tenth part of what she sees. I shall know exactly as much about Rome as she does when we get through, which I am glad to say will be day after to-morrow. We are off for Naples."

While they still sat talking there came a knock at the door. Charlier was there and wished to speak to Mr. Hyde.

"What is it? Come in." But it appeared to be something very particular, for Charlier would not come in, and Mr. Hyde got up and went out.

If they had looked at Amy then they might well have said she was pale. She knew what her brother was going to hear, though she had hardly expected Charlier to speak so soon. When their friends retired to their own apartments and she was left alone, she walked up and down the room, longing only to have the suspense over. Henry stayed so!

He came at last. She was standing then at one of the windows, and did not look round.

"Amy!"

There was a pause in which she made sure that the leap her heart gave was not going to stifle her, then she turned.

"Just think of this! Here has Charlier gone off and left us as coolly as possible!" As she stood with the light behind her, he could not see her face, and went on: "And all because of the Paytons' courier. He never had anything to do with him when we were in Paris—a common sort of fellow, he wasn't likely to—but he says now that he knows he has a wife and children, and considers it his duty, as a countryman, to look after him. I told him the Paytons had done everything that was necessary, and that he had only to write to the French consul, and if the man dies matters would be properly attended to. But he wouldn't hear a word of it. He was quite white with anger in fact, and for anger there is certainly no reason; they did all that could be required."

"What?" exclaimed Mrs. Hyde, who had come into the room.

"Yes, a pretty good one, isn't it? Goes off at a half hour's notice to take the train to Brindisi, and says I can find another courier! However, we parted amiably, for I don't want another and won't have

another, as I told him. My last words were that I shouldn't go to Germany without him, and I suppose he'll be back in the course of time. We must go to Naples in the meanwhile. But it's a most absurd notion for him to take."

Some of the Payton party returned at that moment, and while they were hearing the story Amy crept away to throw herself down in wretchedness there where she had passed some of her sweetest hours in happy visions.

His pride was stronger than his love. His courage had failed at the thought of the accusations that would be heaped upon him. He had not dared to face, even in the consciousness of rectitude, what she would have borne for him if she could. Or was it her courage that he did not trust? For not for a moment could she think, good and noble and self-sacrificing though he was, that he had gone simply because of the man who was lying ill. He had seized on the occasion as a pretext to wrench himself away and leave her free. It was for her that he had done it, but oh how mistaken he had been! When she had counted what she could give up for him, or when she had never counted, but was ready to throw everything away, to leave behind home and friends and all, and take what the future would bring her at his side, what need had he to reckon? She had no sense of anything at the first but the sole, simple,

overwhelming fact that he was gone. Then came the thought that he might be rushing into danger—that the fatal fever might fasten on him too; and that was losing him afresh.

The hours were long for her, as for the lonely traveler on his way to Brindisi, but if a girl's prayers could protect him he traveled safely.

Before Amy met her family again she had decided on a course to pursue. Even such a night as she had spent brings counsel; it had counselled her if ever she had been on her guard to be so now. By degrees things had grown clearer, and a little hope had dawned. "So I suppose he will come back," her brother said; and it seemed to her, too, that he *must* come back again. But they had it now in their own hands to keep him away if their slightest suspicions were awakened. That idea was enough, and she collected all her strength for the part she had to play. Her being already charged with having overdone herself was a fortunate circumstance; she had only to give in that she was not quite well and any change in her looks would be explained. The flush of hope and happiness would not come at her bidding, but all the rest she could control.

"What did I tell you?" said Nelly in triumph. "I knew it. You've been getting paler and paler every day." And perhaps, dazzled by her own exceeding

perspicacity, she really thought so. "It's good there's nobody to go about with you any longer."

Though she spoke as if there were cause for congratulation, they all missed Charlier, and in Naples, when they had heard nothing from him, Mr. Hyde composed an elaborate letter in Italian, which he addressed to the proprietor of the hotel where the Paytons had been, hoping that he might know something of him. This epistolary effort was made with frequent application to the dictionary, and Mr. Hyde, when he read it over, felt well satisfied. It was, however, in some respects a more remarkable production than he imagined, for he had been so absorbed in the beauties of Italian rhetoric as to forget that "my courier"—*il mio corriere*—had any name at all, while he signed his own as if he had been in lifelong correspondence with the hotel-keeper and a few suggestive scratches were sufficient. Meantime, they "did" Naples and its surroundings in somewhat perfunctory style. Amy nagged them to duty no longer. Her sister-in-law, though she was sorry for her, could not help thinking what a delightful effect a little sickness had on some people. When they asked her if she would make some excursion she said she was ready, but if Mrs. Hyde changed her mind, fancied it was going to rain and proposed merely taking a drive instead, Amy assented again just as willingly. It was really almost alarming.

Mr. Hyde too noticed the little drooping ways, and was quite touched to see her so altered. He put his head down to hers, calling her by one of those baby-names that sound to a stranger absurdly inappropriate, but which mean a vast deal of tenderness when they recur after long years:

"What's the matter with my Totty?"

And she pressed her cheek against his whiskers and answered in the same playful strain, though with how much indifference at heart he would not have been flattered had he known. There was something the matter with Totty that was past a brother's helping, unless, indeed, he could be induced to write to Brindisi again, for the famous Italian letter had had no result whatever. By cautious diplomacy she got him to do what she wanted. This time he used English, and added a distinct address, and while they were staying at Sorrento the answer came. It also was in English, of as singular a quality as Mr. Hyde's Italian, and to the effect that "of the peoples he ask about, they not longer there. The courier have get well, and the one go to France in a steamer and the other go to Rome." They could easily conjecture that Charlier was the "other," and the satisfaction was sincere—all but Amy's, that is, for if she had dissimulated in grief, she was deceitful beyond everything in her joy. She said, "Oh, that's nice!" precisely as if it were nothing more than that.

"He will hear at the bankers' that they are keeping our letters and that we shall be up on Tuesday," said Mr. Hyde. "Now, all we have to do is to get out of Italy before this girl treats us to a downright fever."

Just at that moment the girl had no idea of doing anything of the sort; she had hard work not to be too much like herself again.

They arrived in Rome in the morning, and were to leave by the night train for Florence. Charlier was not at the station to meet them. They went to an hotel, and at the hour when the bank would be open Mr. Hyde was ready to go for his letters.

"I'm going too, Henry," said Amy, standing at her door.

"You! Why, I thought you would be lying down. Nelly has regularly gone to bed, and that's what you had better do."

"Oh no, I should n't sleep; I want the air."

As there is no sending a young lady to bed if she does not choose to go, he had to accept her company.

"At least we'll see if they know anything about Charlier," he remarked.

And they knew nothing at all.

"But they might n't think he was the courier," Amy whispered.

"No, to be sure." And the attempt was renewed

with a description. "A tall young man—dark—spoke English, probably; he speaks it perfectly." Oh, yes; the clerk thought then that there had been some one like that inquiring for them, but several days ago, and he had told him they were at Sorrento.

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Hyde, who was beginning to get a little out of patience with the uncertainty of Charlier's movements. "I think he might have waited for us here. He must have gone to Florence."

As the train glided into the Florence station Mrs. Hyde remarked on Amy's flushed cheeks. "Don't, Nelly!" she exclaimed, putting her hands up to her face with a slightly hysterical laugh; "it's nothing."

Again there was no one awaiting them. When they stepped out of the carriage at the hotel where they had stayed before, the place seemed all asleep. It was so early that even the street was deserted, only as they crossed the side-walk there issued from the door a strange procession into the fresh morning air. It was the black-cowled *Misericordia* bearing on their shoulders that burden in its shape as unmistakable as a cradle.

"That's a bad sight," said Mr. Hyde to the hotel porter, who stood just within and was apparently the only person up.

"Oh, sir, don't think anything about it," said the man zealously as the footsteps echoed down the street in even cadence. "It's the only sickness we've had. It was somebody who lately came from Rome with the fever, but he was in quite another part of the house, and you need n't feel the least uneasiness." And then, taking in the whole party with sudden recognition, "Why, it was the young man that was with you when you were here before. It was your courier, sir."

Mrs. Hyde, in telling afterward about that morning and the dreadful shock such sudden tidings had been to them, always added that she was sure she should have fainted away herself if Amy, who was ill at the time, had not sunk right down on the hall floor. "You know, we were really quite attached to him," she would say. "One felt he was good and nice, and a well educated man, too, —not at all a common person. Henry wrote to his mother and told her how highly we had thought of him; he had the letter put in French, so that she could read it—it might be a comfort to her. And we sent some money, too. It was her only son—just think!—all she had in the world. He—poor fellow!—I never believed got the fever at Brindisi; it was in Rome, I am certain; and Amy was just as near having it as any one could be.

In fact, I think she did have it, in a lingering sort of way; she was n't herself again for long and long afterward."

There was only Amy to guess that whatever name his fever bore, it had been besides one of hopes and doubts and fears, of rapture and despair. She knew how he had been drawn slowly back, resisting yet longing—drawn back to her. But she did not speak. It was too late then. They would have "thought highly" of him no longer, and no words of hers would have availed to protect his memory. It was only her silence that could do that. What had passed was to be thenceforth a sealed chapter in her life.

While they were still in Florence she got out unobserved one day, and went to the little chapel of the *Misericordia*. It was there they must have taken him for the ceremony of the absolution. In the many churches she had visited they had often witnessed that together, he and she—not with the pomp of gorgeous vestments and thrilling music, but the poor man's funeral that takes place every day; the few flickering candles, the cheap black pall, the droning voices, and then a few drops of holy water to wash the dust of earth away. She was quite alone as she knelt there with her head on her folded arms; except for the sound of a stifled sob the place was

still as death itself. She was alone until a black-masked figure glided toward her, stopped, listened, and then retreated noiselessly. He had heard her weeping, and, unwilling to disturb her, took his stand at the door and waited to close the chapel until she should be ready to go. Amy did not start when she saw him. She had forgotten her horror of the mysterious veil; one of those men had stood at his bedside! A sudden thought flashed through her mind, and she stopped instead of passing out. It was a desperate hope, but there might be something beneath that black shroud that could understand her. She spoke in English, and asked where the young man was buried whom they had taken from the Hotel de——. There was no reply,—possibly the rules of the order obliged him to silence,—but still she repeated her question, and more appealingly. This time there came a muffled voice: "*Aspetti, signora.*" She knew that meant "Wait," and stood there while he went away for a moment and came back again. He held a paper having on it the name of a cemetery, and the voice said, in quaint English, that she was to show the few lines that were written beneath to the man at the gate and he would lead her to the spot.

She followed the directions and was heartbroken at what she saw. Those only who have been in

such a place can picture the desolation that is often found there. The Hydes intended to leave in proper hands the charge of having the grave marked by a stone, but as yet it was nothing but a heap of gray earth in the line of tall, black-painted head-boards leaning this way and that, and hung with jet wreaths or yellow everlastings. A girl had stolen up curiously—the sexton's daughter—and Amy, as she turned to go, put something in her hand. She wanted to tell her to keep *that* grave fresh and green, to let nothing unsightly rest there, and though she had no language to express it, her eyes spoke as she glanced at the lowly mound and back again. *Fiori* —she could say that—flowers. All amazed at the golden dowry that she held, the girl looked in the sweet, white face and gave her promise. She kept it faithfully, and year by year, on All Saint's Day, she lighted a taper there and decked the stranger's grave with flowers.

And Amy too was faithful. Long after she was bound by other ties she was faithful to her first love. Why not? There had been nothing of this earth about it—nothing more material than a perfume of violets and the syllables of her own name, made sweeter in foreign speech. It had belonged from the first to another world, where all things beautiful are possible, and there she possessed it still. When she

sat once more looking at the Alban hills, the Apennines and Rome, she thought of something as pure and fair and distant as the snow on the mountain tops, and her hand, busy with some pebbles picked up from the path, arranged them after an unforgotten pattern. But she traced no name—only a little cross and the one word, *Pax.*

MISTRESS WILSON.

A Tale of Salem Witchcraft.

"THE child is bewitched, goodman! Thyself hast heard how it shrieked and screamed when the minister and elders were here to pray. And Dame Walford says that as Parson Williams laid his hand upon it, it made a fearful grimace at him and turned black in the face."

"I saw it not," said the goodman, laconically.

"And, morever, Dame Walford says mayhap it's not our child at all, but some devil's brat that the witch spirited here and took our babe for her own. And it's true, Enoch, her child has curling hair and a fresh color like thine, whilst this one is sure neither like me nor thee." The young mother as she spoke, looked at the little creature on her lap with a painful expression of aversion and distrust.

"Nay, Miriam, that I cannot say. It has thy blue eyes and yellow hair. If only it were healthy and

strong thou 'dst see it was very like thee." The father stooped and touched tenderly the little wasted hand and looked into the baby's face, pinched and worn with sickness. "The Lord hath sent us a weakly child and we should rather care for it as best we can and pray to Him to do the rest than accuse innocent folk of bewitching it. I tell thee, Miriam," he continued, straightening up his tall form again and looking at her with sorrowful sternness, "if Mistress Wilson is hanged I shall ne'er know another happy hour; nor thou either when thou hast thy senses again, for verily if one is bewitched it is thou, poor wife, and not the child."

"Ay, say thy wife is a witch and have done!" was the bitter and passionate answer. "It were better to thy taste, mayhap, that I sat to-day in Salem jail and Mistress Wilson here. She is a beautiful woman, and, since her husband ne'er came back from sea, thou canst not pity her enough."

"Shame on thee!" was the goodman's sole reply, and he turned away and stood at the little window looking out into the twilight. The ticking of the clock was the only sound in the room, till the mother laid the child in a cradle and pushed it from her as far as her arm would reach. At the movement, Enoch turned again and came back to her.

"Miriam," he said, gently, "Miriam!"

"Thou knowest better than all the learned gentlemen about the witches," she answered, slowly, with a hard expression about her mouth, "better than Pastor Williams and they in Salem, and better than Mr. Cotton Mather himself, who says the children of the devil must be cast out, root and branch. And thinkest thou the governor had held his peace if it were as thou wouldest have it, and the witches all innocent folk? Nay, but they confess their misdeeds, themselves. Goody Blake, that was hanged o' Tuesday, raged and foamed at the mouth when they asked her, in court, had she or no tormented the Pryor children and given Mistress Dwight horrid rheumatic pains. She cursed them then before the judge and all the people, and said, if she could she would come back from hell to plague them."

"God be merciful to us! Goody Blake had a fiery tongue and was ever a poor half-dazed old wretch. The gentlemen of the court know what they do, I trust. I had let her alone, an' it had been my say. Still, Miriam, I dispute not with the learned men who affirm that Satan is going up and down among us. It may be so. Only this I say, that Mistress Wilson cursed no one. She only answered, 'Nay, on my soul,' as gently as I have heard her speak, how oft, in this very room, when the judge charged her with throwing the parson's son into fits and

bewitching our babe, here. 'Nay, on my soul,' she said, and stood straight and looked him in the face. 'God knows I have wished the poor babe naught but good from the time it came into the world.' And I bethought me, Miriam, how kindly and helpful she was when the child was born; how she watched with thee at night and rocked the babe in her arms."

"Ay, and she well knew why," said the mother, the lowering cloud of hatred darkening in her face. "My babe has ne'er known a healthful hour and hers is like a rose. She has drawn the life out of our child into her boy, if indeed it be our child at all!"

"How canst thou be so cruel?" burst forth the indignant answer. "The parson's son is well again, and this poor child has naught the matter with it but that it was born of a weakly nature, like many another one before. Even now, Miriam, thou hast only to declare that thou believest it not, and Mistress Wilson might go free. Think, wife, she is young, like thee, and has a child as thou hast; and must she die and leave the little creature alone in this hard world, all because thou hast listened to old wives' tales? Nay, God forbid! Thou hadst ne'er thought it of thyself, I know; thou art too tender-hearted to work so much evil to a fellow creature, but thou hast done a great wrong in letting others' wicked suggestions get possession of

thy heart, and there is but barely time to make it good again."

The young face looking into the glowing fire lost no whit of the fixed expression that disfigured it. There came no reply.

"Miriam," said the youthful goodman, with passionate pleading in his tone, "say the word and I will get her release this night, before it be too late."

Again no answer was vouchsafed. Righteous anger flashed in Enoch's eyes and his voice trembled with deep emotion, as he added:

"Hear this, then! If Mistress Wilson is hanged to-morrow morn, her blood shall be between me and thee so long as we both shall live."

As he stood in the firelight, with uplifted hand and trembling lips, like an avenging angel, Miriam gazed at him with a sort of awe. But after he had waited in vain for her to speak, when he left her and she heard the house door close behind him, a bitter smile crept over her lips and she let her head sink on her hand.

Her meditations were disturbed directly. The door of the 'keeping-room,' as the family sitting-room of those days was called, opened to admit an elderly woman in the prim costume of that olden time.

"How goes it with the child, Miriam? Has it

had the fits again?" she asked with eager curiosity.

"Nay, dame, but it has cried since the morning till now, and it has the witch's mark on its forehead as I have almost ne'er seen it before."

The two women bent together over the cradle and contemplated its little occupant who had fallen into a troubled slumber. Between the baby's brows that scowled as if the child were still in pain, lay indeed a deep red flush; the feverish token, perhaps, of its incessant crying. While they looked the little parched lips twitched and moved. A happier mother might have said the babe was smiling, but when Dame Walford whispered mysteriously, "The witch is talking to it," Miriam nodded assent and sank back in her chair.

"Think ye, dame," she asked, looking fixedly at the flames, while the visitor took her place at the other corner of the hearth, "think ye if I laid the babe in the fire the witch would come and fetch it?"

"Lord!" exclaimed the other, evidently startled by the boldness of the proposition. "But perchance it is thine own, after all, Miriam. *I* think thou should'st do nothing until the witch is hanged. Then if it's hers, it will after her, but if it's thine, it will get well when she can torment it no more."

"But if it is hers and goes after her, then have I no child!"

"Ay, marry, then is the other thine."

"I could think it, for it has a color like Enoch's and curling hair, only that it is so fond of her. It clung to her ever when she caressed it and cried when she left it, like any other child."

"But and if she charmed it? A witch can do that as well."

"Enoch says this babe's like me."

"Nay, that it's not! Mind thee, I say not it is not thine. The parson thinks it is and so do others who have spoke to me of the matter. But thine or no, it's not like thee, and if Enoch says it, it is because he, like many another husband, has no eyes for his wife's face. Why, I saw thee a babe in thy mother's arms and thou wast ever the fairest child, ay, and till thy marriage the fairest maid, in all the country round."

"Only, since then I am no more so fair."

"Thou art no more so gay," was the evasive answer.

"How can I be gay with that before my eyes," asked the mother, pointing to the cradle, "and Enoch ever reproaching me?"

"Enoch believes not in the witches?"

"He believes not that Mistress Wilson is a witch."

"Ay, ay! There are others like him. I have heard many a man praise her as fair and good. Fair

she is, of a truth, and peradventure her beauty has been a snare to her—her beauty and pride. For she carries her head high, Mistress Wilson. She comes of a great family, they say, and verily she has a likeness of her father with lace ruffles to his shirt and a sword at his side. What might he say if he could see her now? And Abner Wilson, too! That would have been but an evil wind that brought him into port to hear his wife called witch. To my thinking, that's a worse name than gossip and busybody, as I've heard she's called me—though I bear her no malice for that."

"Ay," said Miriam, musingly, "and who can tell why Abner ne'er came back again? A witch can brew bad weather. Think ye not so, dame?"

"Marry," quoth the dame, "a witch would do it, too, had she seen a man that pleased her better than her husband—though I'll not say that of Mistress Wilson, for I bear her no malice."

While these scenes were passing in Enoch Dalton's homestead that lay on the highway between Salem and the little fishing village of Marblehead, the shades of evening had descended upon the first-mentioned town, and the lights twinkled out here and there from the houses, while the streets were already deserted. In 1693, they were not brilliantly illuminated and the inhabitants found it more agreeable to stay within doors than to light their own uncertain

steps with a hand-lantern. Nearly in the center of the town rose Salem jail, dark and uninviting in outward appearance though in reality hospitable enough. It held within its four walls more guests than any house in all New England could have boasted. Wild accusations following closely on each other had peopled its cells with witches, and when one was given over to the hangman's hands, there was no danger that a new occupant for the vacant place would not soon be found.

Besides these unwilling guests, however, there were on this particular evening certain others, two or three worthy neighbors of Mistress Burns, the jailer's wife. The goodly dames had the pleasure of hearing from her own lips how the Reverend Mr. Pryor and the justice had made a solemn visit that afternoon to the witch, Mistress Wilson, who was to be hanged on the morrow—how they had exhorted her to confess her evil practices and her penitence for the same, and how they had been obliged to go away with their purpose uneffected, because the witch obstinately continued to declare that she had done no harm to any creature. Then had the reverend gentleman affirmed that he had wrestled long and earnestly for her sinful soul, and that now, unless she expressly begged for his ghostly counsel, he should come to her no more. That meant that the dismal jail-cart, the sheriff and the

hangman were the only further assistance she was to have on the journey to the other world. The shudder that such a thought awakened, taken in connection with Mistress Burns's good cheer, amounted to an agreeably appalling sensation. The good wives would fain see the witch, they said—just a little peep, as it were, for, verily, to approach her too nearly in the last hours were ill-advised.

The room in which Mistress Wilson was to pass the night before her execution was somewhat larger and more commodious than the cell where she had been confined. It had been thought only fitting that the worshipful and reverend gentlemen should be received in decent quarters—a mid-way halting place for her between the narrow walls of a dungeon and eternity's illimitable space. The room was made secure by iron gratings and locks and bolts innumerable, and it had a small, barred window opening on a passage and provided with a shutter pushed to and fro at will from the outside, by means of which the occupants could be observed. Mistress Burns opened this shutter a little way, and then several pairs of eyes peered in through the crack.

The witch was walking slowly up and down, clad in the widow's garb that she had worn since all hope was lost of her husband's return from sea. She held in her arms her child that she had been allowed to have once more before her death, not so

much because of her earnest prayer as to see if the Dalton babe experienced ill effects. It was a beautiful little creature that laid its curly head upon her shoulder, and in passing to and fro before the tallow candle,—forgotten when her inquisitors departed,—she never failed to look down at the bloom upon its cheeks, just visible in that dim light. It was hardly to be supposed that the witch's brat had been very tenderly cared for during her long confinement, but nevertheless she clasped it again with joy, as fresh and lovely as a rose. If the proof of her evil doings lay in the fact that her child throve while others peaked and pined, then indeed her guilt was plain.

"She kisses the babe," whispered the women at the window.

"Ay, she makes as if she were very fond of it, but I know not whether to think she is or no."

"I verily think she is," said the jailer's wife, "for there can none come nigh her but she'll beg and pray them to care for the child when she is gone. Even to-day she importuned the worthy gentlemen in most unseemly manner and wept and wrung her hands till they were fain to tell her the parish would care for it e'en though it be a witch's babe."

"Mistress Burns," came a somewhat deep but clear voice that made them all start, "I pray thee, give me some milk for the child." The little creature had begun to be uneasy and to fret, for, sharing its

mother's confinement, it was condemned to her fare of bread and water which had proved in no way to its taste.

"Wouldst give it her?" consulted the jailer's wife.

"Nay, wherefore?" said one. "Let her find a charm to still it." And another, as Mistress Wilson made a step toward the window, clapped the shutter to in all haste.

"Let her not breathe on us, for then are we all bewitched! I doubt she is very dangerous to-night."

The women fled back in alarm to the festive candlelight and the evening entertainment of cake and cider with which their hostess was presently to treat them. But she, retiring to the pantry to bring in those dainties with her own hands, arranged her tray as if she were all the time thinking of something else. Finally, she took down a pewter mug out of which her children once had drunk, poured it full of milk and went down the passage again to the little wooden shutter.

Hark! the child was fretting but the mother sang —a simple little song enough, though a strange one for a witch:

"Hush, my babe, lie still and slumber,
Holy angels guard thy bed,
Heavenly blessings without number
Gather round thy infant head."

The listener waited till the voice ceased and then, opening the window, said cautiously:

"I've brought thee some milk, mistress."

The witch was there in an instant with a thankful exclamation on her lips, and this time the other forgot to be alarmed at her vicinity, for the little can stuck fast between the bars and both were only bent on extricating it.

Mistress Wilson had laid aside her widow's cap for the night and loosened her dark hair that fell like a veil over her shoulders. The light from the lamp which the jailer's wife had set on the window ledge shone on her white forehead and downcast lids with their delicately fringed lashes, while her slender fingers worked about the cup to draw it through. As it yielded at last, she said, as if the unlooked-for kindness awakened a sudden hope, but in a voice that betrayed the coming tears:

"O Mistress Burns, wilt thou think of my boy sometimes when—"

But that was too much for the other. To her excited fancy the deep violet blue eyes shone with a mysterious light, and who could tell but the breath from those sorrow-speaking lips had already contaminated her? The closing window cut off the rest as Mistress Burns snatched her lamp and sped away.

"Shalt be at the hanging?" asked her friends when they took leave.

"It is very early in the morning," was the doubtful answer.

"They say it is thus ordered that there may be no so great crowd as heretofore. It creates a clamor and disturbance that is unseemly in a town so plainly under the judgments of Providence as this. Still I myself think to be there, for of the last I was prevented by my husband's cousin, Increase Goodwin, with his wife and children and wife's sister who all came to see those end that were hanged o' Tuesday, so that I was forced to stand at the kitchen fire and prepare a meal for them while they amused themselves in the streets. This time, however, it is my turn, since no one is like to come before six o'clock in the morning. And surely it is a comforting and edifying spectacle in these troublous times to see the witches given over to their father, the devil."

"Ay," said another of the women, "and perchance she will confess in the end, as Hester Scott did at sight of the gallows. For Hester declared, as ye all know, only not that she herself had attended the witches' Sabbath, but told of many whom she had met in that devil's congregation, and spake of none, forsooth, with more certainty than of Mistress Wilson, who rode through the air with her cat on her shoulder and boasted of how she was drawing the Dalton child's blood from its finger-ends and tor-

menting Mr. Williams' son thrice daily. It is an excellent thing when the witches confess. Only so can full knowledge be obtained who among us is sold to Satan."

"Verily," said a third. "Howbeit, to my thinking, the judges act somewhat slowly in this matter and give the evil time to spread. One hundred and fifty imprisoned and as yet but seventy condemned and only twenty hanged! I doubt the gentlemen would do better to proceed more quickly with the sentences, for so the jails are full to overflowing and many escape detection from the impossibility of bringing them to trial. Well, well, we must be watchful in prayer and tarry in patience till it pleaseth the Lord to look upon our affliction. I wish thee good-night, mistress, and hope to meet thee to-morrow."

There were many in the town that night who waked to weep and pray. In one house were some grievously tormented, in another a member of the family had been torn from it, charged with practicing the devices of Satan and dragged, accursed of God and man, to imprisonment, condemnation and death. But one who sat in Salem jail heard every hour of the night go by, till the watchman called for the last time his delusive cry of "All's well!" and the day had dawned—the day when a witch was to die.

In Enoch Dalton's household also there was little sleep that night. Miriam, beset with entreaties and reproaches, answered in the sayings of the godly Cotton Mather or with the line of Holy Writ, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." The woman was like flint in her resolve, and words never so appealing had as much effect on her as the rushing breakers on the cliffs of Marblehead that they cover for a moment with foam and spray, and, falling back, leave as hard and bleak and frowning as before. Enoch only wore himself out and paced the room at last alone, while Miriam lay down to take a more feigned than real repose.

She did him wrong. It was a pure sentiment of humanity, a manly instinct to help and protect a hunted, defenceless woman who, in her happier days, had gone in and out of his house on errands of neighborly kindness, that made him speak for Mistress Wilson now. He was not so far beyond his fellow-citizens in cool-headedness and understanding as to repudiate the idea of witchcraft altogether. How should he have been when that storm of superstition that swept over the land carried with it men who stood as thinkers high above their fellows? Learned and godly men held discourses on the manifold arts of the Evil One, by which he ensnared weak souls to do his bidding, and for aught Enoch knew that might be true. There might be witches. Only

one who had shown naught but kindness to him and his, one to whose accusation jealousy was not a stranger, his straightforward, shrewd common-sense told him was no witch. He was a plain man who troubled himself little with what lay beyond him; it was Mr. Mather's business to make sermons and interpret, as it were, for God and the devil; it was his business to plough and sow and reap and mind his household, and whatever questions came up there, in his own little sphere, he was capable to decide upon. His child was not bewitched but sick, and the Evil One had whispered more suggestions to his wife than to Mistress Wilson. It was the phrase on everyone's lips in those dark times, "Satan is abroad," and Enoch believed it. Satan had entered his wife's heart! Alas, yes, and possibly his own, too, as he bitterly swore a never-dying mindfulness of this wrong that was to be—an eternal memory for a finite error.

Miriam's pretended slumber became real at length, but as she fell asleep with her mind full of confused and distressing thoughts, they followed her into her dreams. Like the shifting figures of a kaleidoscope, melting one into another, horrid pictures passed through her poor bewildered brain. The house stood in flames because she had thrown the baby on the fire, and all the neighbors were there calling her murderess and trying to drag her away to justice.

Then some one whispered "witch," and one after another took up the word and they fell back from her, pointing with their fingers and jeering. And again she was sitting by the hearth with Dame Walford on the other side, and suddenly it was not the dame but Mistress Wilson who sat there with a rope around her neck. Her face was deathly pale and her dark blue eyes, fixed upon Miriam, seemed to cast a spell over her so that she could neither move nor cry out as she would fain have done. Then the babe in her arms began to struggle and, getting down went to Mistress Wilson and clambered on her knees. It reached up and took the rope with its little hands and threw it in the fire and immediately there was a dazzling light and Mistress Wilson stood clothed in a white robe, with wings at her shoulders, and Miriam knew it was her spirit. Upon that she was seized with a great dread, for the child stood holding by her and would not return to Miriam though she recognized it for her own in that brightness and tried and tried in vain to call it back. It was very fair. There was no trace of the witch's mark upon its brow and its hair shone golden in the light that streamed around. Then it appeared that the spirit turned to go, the child ever following, and, with a great effort, Miriam broke the spell and stretched out her arms and cried:

"Nay, take it not! It is mine! I know it now. It is mine, indeed!"

As she spoke she felt a sharp pain and her eyes opened. The sun was shining in her face and she had struck her hand on the child's little bed that stood beside her. Half bewildered yet from her dream, she raised herself and saw the babe lying in peaceful slumber. Its little face looked very sweet and fair; its brow was smooth and the sunbeams slanting past seemed to make a halo round its golden hair. Even as she looked at it the black thoughts and fancies of days and weeks gone by melted like the dark visions of that night and, as in her dream, she recognized the child. But a nameless anxiety fell upon her and a horrible dread, and her voice was shrill and strange as she called:

"O Enoch, Enoch, rise and ride to town! For the child is well again. The child is mine, and Mistress Wilson must not die!"

He started up from the chair where he had fallen asleep in sheer exhaustion. The words rang like a clarion. The spell was broken—the scales had fallen from his wife's eyes—the child was well! But Mistress Wilson—was there yet time to save her?

He spoke not a word but saddled the old plough horse with shaking hands, swung himself on it and rode away. Never since he could remember had he slept so late as on that morning! Far over the

sea the fishing-boats that had put out at dawn, showed now but a speck of shining sail. And hark! were those the Salem bells that the wind brought so far? No, for the hour appointed for the witch to die had sounded long ago. There was no hope that he could reach the jail. He must make for Gallows hill, by the shortest way, to meet the fatal train beyond the town. He urged his horse to a furious pace that was still far too slow for his feverish spirit. As the road stretched on between fields and fences, he had no eyes for the springing green in the fresh furrows, no thoughts to count the time till the apple-trees would stand white with blossoms on the hillside. He saw only a dismal procession issuing from the dark portals of the jail, Mistress Wilson standing in the cart with her arms bound behind her, and the tumultuous crowd that accompanied her slow progress jeering and shouting when she swayed to and fro and all but lost her balance at the rough jolts over the pavement; the men gazing with hard, cold eyes, the women pointing, the children shrieking in exultation, "The witch is hit! the witch is hit!" when some stone from a little hand fell with a truer aim than all the rest. He had seen such things before. He could picture it to hi self so distinctly that the great drops rolled over h forehead as he felt his powerlessness to make an e to the cruel scene. Then, out of the precincts of t

town, along the sunny road, the cart went on and on till it stopped beside the gallows. His heart began to thump heavily, his breath came thick and short. Only a little farther, only to the turn in the way, and he should see the spot, should see if the crowd were there, should see—should see—

The awful presentiment that oppressed him became a paralyzing weight. There was only that one hope left to which many a soul has clung in its anguish, a hope in the very horror of the thing it fears. It would be so cruel, it would be so dreadful, that it could not be!

He had reached the turning. Should he look up? Was it the pulsing blood that made that murmur in his ears or were they already there? He urged his horse forward to one last desperate effort before he dared to raise his head. And then—merciful heaven! The accursed thing stood in the fair spring morning and something swayed therefrom.

Shortly after, a troop of boys dashing down the hill caught sight of a solitary rider whose spent horse plodded its weary way upward with signs of great exhaustion but taking its own course and its own time to the task, for the man had dropped the reins and was so bowed over his horse's neck that they recognized him only with difficulty.

"Hey, Master Dalton!" they cried in boisterous

merriment as they came near, "ye are too late for the hanging!"

The man raised himself and looked at them with glazed eyes and an ashen face. They were children from the fisher huts in Marblehead, and knew their wealthier neighbor well, but the countenance he turned to them to-day was so strange that they stopped to stare as he rode by and then, putting their heads together for a consultation, turned and followed him.

Enoch knew as little as they why he went on. "Too late! too late!" he had been repeating to himself with a strange, confused, sickening feeling before they shouted the words in his ears. Still, he went on; perhaps it was more from the impossibility of going back than from any aim or object that he had in view.

"Her blood shall be between me and thee," he had said, and how could he meet his wife again?

It was still and deserted on the hill-top, but Enoch had no consciousness of being alone. The crowd might have been surging about him for aught he knew. He was only aware of a long, long shadow on the grass; he heard the clanking of a chain, and taking his hat from his head as if he had stood by Mistress Wilson's open grave, he glanced upward. A shriek of shrill, childish laughter burst upon his ear as his eyes fixed themselves in stupefied amaze on

a pole tied round with fluttering rags that dangled from the gallows.

"Know ye not, master," said the children, swarming around him, "the governor hath sent command there shall be no more hanging until he himself hath fuller knowledge of the matter of witchcraft? The messenger rode post-haste into Salem just after daybreak. One told us that we met on the highway, but as we were out for a frolic we were fain to pluck up a scarecrow from the field yonder and hang that instead of the witch, an' it may not displease ye."

The children's wild mirth grew still when they saw how he bent his head and hid his face with his hands. They drew back, wondering and awe-struck at his silence, and left him alone. As he turned bridle at last and rode away home, once more two words repeated themselves over and over within him, but this time they came from a joyful and grateful heart that could only think and say, "Thank God! thank God!"

WOLOWSKI.

He appeared suddenly one day in mid-winter of the year 1861, in our quiet little town. It was a thawing January day, the air delightfully soft, almost spring-like, and the walking soft too, though not delightful. I was crossing the street to go to Mr. Butman's, the book-seller's, and as I paused before a treacherous expanse of half-melted snow that lay between me and the side-walk, a voice said:

"Will you allow me?" and a hand was extended to my aid.

The next moment I had landed safely on *terra firma*, and was looking into the face of the handsomest man I had ever seen in my life. I had not seen many men, it is true, at that time, being only just out of school, but I could say the same to-day, as I remember that cameo-like head, the deep blue eyes, with tinge of melancholy, and the clustering brown curls. He raised his hat in answer to my

thanks, sprang over the slushy gutter and went his way.

I seem to see him now. He had on a *talma* that swayed gracefully from his shoulders as he walked. I call it a *talma*, because it resembled a cape of that name which, some years before had been in fashion for women, only his was longer and well befrogged down the front.

On entering the bookstore, I found the vision had been there before me. Old Mr. Butman, with knitted brows, was studying a document which he passed to me across the counter, observing that a gentleman had just been in who said he was a Pole and would like to give French lessons, and perhaps I could make something out of that paper. It was in French and my school-girl knowledge of that tongue enabled me to make of it that M. Paul Wolowski was eminently fitted to teach the French language, in the opinion of various persons who signed themselves respectively as members of the *Institut de France*, of the *Comedie Francaise*, and of the *Conservatoire de Paris*. And following this was a statement in English, that Mr. Wolowski was prepared to take classes or single pupils on the most moderate terms.

The first thing he taught, however, and *gratis*, was the pronunciation of his own name, and, in case

any one should be deceived by appearances, as we were, I will mention that we eventually accepted on trust that it contained no w's and called him Volofski.

It soon appeared that he had done well in passing by larger places and choosing for the scene of his labors our small and select town, where there were no rivals in the field. One began to hear of this person and that taking lessons of him, and then five or six of us girls discovered that we were likely to forget all the French we had acquired at school, and, forming ourselves into a class which was to meet at my home, Mr. Wolowski was notified of our desire for instruction.

Upon that he called, and of all evenings to select it must be one when we had company! That was my first thought as I caught a glimpse of him divesting himself, in the hall, of his worn-looking *talma*, for that garment, which was now a familiar feature in our streets, no longer made the same impression as at first; there could be no doubt it had seen its best days, and his other habiliments were not much fresher. I felt pity for him, therefore, launched unexpectedly into a company of well-dressed people.

Probably, I had never seen a "man of the world" at that time, to recognize him at least, for my astonishment was as great as my relief to observe how he

bore himself under the afflicting circumstances—how he approached my mother with a graceful salutation, and bowed in a thoroughly foreign, but perfectly easy way to one and another, as he was presented, how absolutely unconscious he appeared of being poorly clad, a stranger, an alien.

He spoke English well, though with a slight accent, which, however, only made his speech more charming, and gave a certain distinction to the merest commonplaces of conversation. But he did not stay long, and as he took leave, it was arranged in a few quiet words between my mother and him about the class. Then, when he was fairly gone, every one began to talk of him and say—just what I felt.

I have met Poles since, and heard people talk about them, too, and they have not always expressed the same sort of opinion which was current in our drawing-room that evening. Those who pretend to know the nation best, some of those who have profited by its dismemberment, for instance, may epitomize its characteristics after this fashion,—they may say that Poles are sometimes very handsome, often very fascinating, always—very unprincipled, But there are few things so untrue as such generalizations, and, at all events, our Pole was not like that. As handsome and fascinating as you please, but no one had the slightest reason to suppose that

his principles were not in good working order. The term "man of the world," as applied to him, should be understood in its simplest meaning. When I say *our* Pole, however, the expression may be taken in a very extended sense, for I really believe the whole town adopted him. I know it was told how, in the house where he boarded, they were all deeply concerned about his appetite, and how the good landlady, after trying him with everything from buckwheat cakes to mince pie, wished pathetically that she knew what his mother used to get for him. Even the naughty little boys in the street, who began by jeering, in their contempt for anything which appeared to them outlandish, and calling after him "Roly-Poly!"—a ridiculous nickname for his slenderness—learned to regard him when they found he took a snow-ball in good part, and knew how to make a return in kind; they came to like the quick, bright look he threw at them as he passed, and gave up their nonsense. And then, finally, he was taken up by society.

It was noticed that he always declined with thanks any invitation which would call for a dress suit. It was easy to guess why, and the greater pity that one could see from his light step and graceful gait what a splendid dancer he must be; but wherever a well-brushed, every-day coat would pass muster he went, and made himself agreeable, which

he evidently regarded as the first of social duties, and accomplished in such a manner as to give not the slightest cause for gossip. I could not even perceive that in our class he looked much oftener at the beauty than at the rest of us. He distributed his attentions as impartially as his excellent instruction.

The truth was, his heart was elsewhere. He had an unhappy attachment, and we, his class, used to hear a great deal about it. She was beautiful and unfortunate, and there seemed to be no prospect of their coming together. It may appear strange that he should so have bestowed his confidence upon us, but it must be considered that he spoke French. "*Ah ma pauvre patrie! Elle est bien malheureuse!*" We used to converse during a part of our lesson, and as we modestly left most of the conversation to him, we heard not a little about Poland. And when some parlor lectures were arranged for him, with a kindly view to his profit as well as that of the audience, we heard still more. I knew at that time, all about the dynasties of Piast and Jaquello, and that Poland once stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea and from the Dnieper to the Vistula, and if I did not discover why she was called a republic, yet governed by kings, perhaps nobody knows that.

Wolowski naturally liked to dwell on the glories of his country, but I believe we found her sufferings

more interesting, and though he proposed to avoid, as far as possible, distressing details of executions and Siberia, and the way in which women and children were made to share in the woes of the vanquished, we had horrors enough.

Some of those stories I have seen since in sober history, but there was one he told of a Polish countess, which I have not met with again. It was at the time of the Insurrection of 1830 and '31. The fighting was over and the confiscations had not yet begun; so the lady, a young widow whose husband had fallen at Gracow, was still mistress of his ancestral home. Some of the patriots who had held command in the insurrection assembled secretly at her castle, one night, to form some plans for the future before they went their several ways.

The conference was interrupted by a breathless outpost announcing that the *gendarmerie* was coming.

The countess urged her guests to flight, and it was as necessary for her safety as for their own, for if they were found there she would be involved in a conspiracy. There was a secret, underground passage leading from a cellar out into the fields, and to this they betook themselves, so that when the *gendarmerie* arrived, it was only to find the countess alone, and prepared to receive them with apparent composure.

Where were Prince this and Count that, and Baron so-and-so?

"They are not here."

"But we know they are! It is useless to deny it. The castle is surrounded. Give them up! It will be the better for you."

"Search," she said, calmly. "If you find any men here but my servants, I have told you a lie."

That was precisely what they believed she had done, and they stormed over the place from attic to cellar, where, finally, they discovered the secret passage, insufficiently masked after the hasty flight, and lying close by, a man's riding-glove with a great gauntlet. The intended prey had escaped for that time, but the sport was not yet quite over. The officer took the glove and returned to the countess, holding his hand behind him.

"Madam," he said, "you are right, there are no men here. All we have found is a secret passage and *this*—one of your gloves, apparently." And then he stretched it out before her, and looked at her little hands and gazed in her pale face with horrid exultation.

They took her with them that night. She was found guilty of something by somebody; her child, born in prison, was dispossessed of his inheritance, and she exiled to Siberia. But God was merciful. Somewhere on the journey into the awful solitude,

at one of the wretched stations where the prisoners snatch a few moments of repose, she died.

After the lecture, a warm-hearted soul exclaimed:

"O, Mr. Wolowski, what did become of the poor baby? I hope it died too?

"You may well say *hope*," he returned, "for if the child had lived, his relatives would have had all they could do to educate him, and then he must have roamed the world in search of a living."

I saw another question suddenly flash into her face, and he did too, for he turned away. But when he came to the class next time, and I told him I had been thinking of that poor young widow ever since—

"That is kind," he answered softly, quite thrown off his guard. "It was my mother."

Wolowski was quite devoted to a certain dear, young-old lady, who had been chiefly instrumental in getting up the lectures. He would go and sit with her for hours, and as I was accustomed to pass an evening occasionally with her, it happened that we once met at her house.

Our hostess declared that she had been feeling her age miserably all day; she was depressed, and Mr. Wolowski must tell her something to entertain her. But none of his sad stories!

"Polish stories are all sad," he observed.

She pronounced that to be impossible.

"Yes, all," he persisted, obstinately. "A Pole never has any luck; and if he did have, trust him for getting rid of it!"

"Nonsense!" she exclaimed. "You are thinking of something not at all sad at this very moment." And, in fact, there was a sparkle in his eyes; he had a very expressive face.

So presently he began a story about a friend of his named Gazinski. He had the facts, he said, as well as some of the minor incidents from this friend himself, but in telling them in the form of a story, he should perhaps "embroider them a little." In any case it was an example of Polish luck.

Like most Polish nobles who had anything worth taking, Gazinski had lost his estate; a tolerable education was all he had to live on, when, very unexpectedly, a distant relative, who had married into a foreign country, left him some money. He stood quite alone in the world by that time, and had nobody to think of but himself.

"He might have thought of his country," said Wolowski. "He has told me since that he ought to have done so, and lived prudently in view of future possibilities; but he was young and selfish, as some young people unfortunately are, and his first concern was for his own pleasure. He went to Vienna, one of the most charming European capitals, and plunged into gaiety. His idea of pleasure just then

was to shine in society, and in that he achieved success. Nobody was more elegantly attired than Gazinski, nobody rode a finer horse or gave more exquisite little suppers than Gazinski, and perhaps, for the amount of display he made, nobody had a smaller fortune than Gazinski. Naturally, the end of it was that one fine day he had just enough left to pay his debts and betake himself elsewhere. He had no mind to stay there and be poor. He went to Paris.

"A Pole can always teach something, and my friend knew a little about drawing and could play the piano tolerably, and so he proceeded to *courir le cachet* as a music-teacher and drawing-master. '*Courir le cachet?*' O that is teaching from house to house, and no lesson, no pay.

"Newly arrived, he was without acquaintances in Paris who could have been serviceable to him, and was not himself very apt in pushing his affairs, so his pupils belonged mostly to families of very moderate means, and the prices were in proportion.

"It came about, however, in course of time, that he obtained for a pupil the daughter of a very wealthy banker, and as she would not have thought his lessons worth having unless he charged a good price for them, he considered himself in luck. Moreover, this young lady never sent to say that she did not wish to take her lesson. She was much inter-

ested in drawing, for which she had a certain talent, and at last Gazinski used to go to her nearly every day, so great was her zeal.

"She was extremely pretty, and had, apparently, no objection to people's letting her see that they thought her so. She found it rather amusing, perhaps, when they sighed or cast expressive glances, or picked up a flower that she dropped.

"As to her companion, who watched over her and was always present at the lessons, she too must have been amused by what went on, for she seems never to have interfered in the least. Possibly she was of a sentimental disposition, and not overburdened with brains, so that her charge was able to persuade her that the folly was all on the young man's part, and that, after all, he was more to be pitied than blamed.

"As to folly, it might be difficult to decide which was the most feather-headed of those three who used to pass long, sunny hours together in a luxurious little *salon* from which the conservatory opened conveniently for the flower-exercise, but probably Gazinski was as little to blame as any one. He simply thought if his pupil was enjoying herself, why should not he also get a little enjoyment out of a game which is so eminently fitted for two to play at? At most it could only be a draw game, where the daughter of a millionaire was on the one side

and a poor teacher on the other: still it was amusing while it lasted, and he followed the inspiration of the moment without concern.

"Matters were going on in this fashion, when one day he received a note in a feminine hand unknown to him, and which contained only these words: 'Be at your lodging to-night at six o'clock; some one wishes to visit you.'

"He was greatly mystified, but six o'clock found him in his little room *au cinquiéme* of an old house in the Latin Quarter, listening for every sound. It got to be past the hour, and once or twice he thought there was a rustling outside, but then all was still again, until finally there came a faint but unmistakable tap on the door, and when he opened it, there stood his charming pupil, the banker's daughter.

"You will call her a bold girl, perhaps—"

"I should think so," murmured the old lady.

"O, madam, she had no mother!" said Wolowski, reproachfully. But then it was in answer to some look of his that she replied:

"Yes, you can go on. I must see the end of this. My young friend reads novels, and, I dare say, has heard of bold girls before now. For, mother or no mother, bold I still call her."

"Very well, madam," he returned, with meekness, but chivalrously determined to defend the young

lady. "All I can say is that my friend did not think her so. He believed that up to that moment he had never known her, and that instead of the little coquette he had imagined her to be, she was simply a generous romantic, impulsive child, who was not even half so bold as she herself had thought. She stepped into the room, and stood, turning red and white with alarming rapidity, and it was not until she had burst into tears, that he made out between the sobs something about his never being able to ask her, and so she had come, herself, to be his wife —if he would have her!

"He was amazed—he stammered, 'Mademoiselle!' —he was confounded! But—if he would have her? To that there was really but one reply possible. He might be over-whelmed by her generosity and crushed by the sense of his own unworthiness, and yet, when all was said—if he would have her! Was there any answer conceivable but one?

"When the first effervescence of feeling was past and her composure in some degree restored, she unfolded her plan. The sum and substance of it was that they were to go to England to be married. Seeing that she had a little traveling-bag with her, he was not surprised to hear of a journey, and she had made her combinations with as much fore-thought as her father might have employed at the *Bourse*. He was away, it appeared, for twenty-

four hours; she was supposed to be dining with her grandmother, and would not be expected home before nine or ten o'clock; then a good deal of time would be spent in sending back and forth, and finally she believed that neither her grandmother nor Madam X, her companion, would venture to take any steps in the matter until her father's return, the next day, and by that time his daughter would be in England—and married.

"It may have been the mere thought of the marriage ceremony which reminded her that there had been no other—no formal betrothal, to give them the freedom of *fiancées* toward each other; at all events, from that moment she withdrew again into herself; she became as he was used to seeing her, or, at least, she did her best to become that—to be as easy and amiable and natural in her manners as if they were in her little *salon*, instead of in his little attic. He seconded her, but it was an awkward time for them both. Their train did not start till eight o'clock, and what to do with the intervening hour?

"She began a tour of inspection.

"'Your books, monsieur; oh, how learned! And music,—but where is the piano?'

"'I have none, mademoiselle.'

"'Oh!—Why, what is the matter with your window, monsieur? How odd it looks!'

"'It is broken, mademoiselle, and I have pasted paper over it.'

"'Ah!' Then the next moment: 'But there is your *samovar;* let me make some tea.'

"And that was a good idea; only when, in her eagerness to begin, she would have seized a little table and drawn it forward, he had to exclaim hastily:

"'Take care, mademoiselle! that will only stand against the wall.' And one cup had no handle and the other no saucer, and there was nothing to eat.

"Gazinski, himself, took a cup of tea sometimes instead of a meal when it was convenient, but she, poor child, was not used to going without her dinner, and had a journey before her besides.

"'Excuse me if I leave you for a moment, mademoiselle; I want to send for something,' and he dashed out of the room and down stairs four steps at a time. 'Sending for something' was a euphemism; the *concierge* was not likely to do his errands, and he meant to run to the little confectioner's shop at the corner.

"As he went, a tumult of thought coursed through his brain. He had not had time yet to think at all, to realize what a revolution was about to take place in his existence. Surely he was a peculiar favorite of Fortune, for hardly had he succeeded in ruining himself before she came to him again with

her hands full! He never doubted that her father would forgive her—his only child and his darling, what else could he do? After a proper amount of storming and sulking, he would come round and find he had gained a son instead of losing a daughter. For Gazinski was very favorably disposed to his prospective father-in-law, intending to behave toward him with all forbearance, and believing that eventually they should be the best of friends. He even hoped the banker might discover some advantages in the alliance. For one thing, Gazinski had a title, which he used when his circumstances accorded therewith, and he could quite fancy the millionaire liking a title for his daughter. He might, of course, have preferred a French title with some broad acres attached to it, but then one can't have all one wants, —not even the wealthiest of bankers can expect that.

"In short, Gazinski arranged everything to suit himself and, as the saying is, the sky hung full of fiddles, as he ran to the confectioner's. On the way back, however, he was pained to discover that to this aerial concert there was an accompaniment somewhere of a bass viol which grumbled out to a disagreeable tune, 'Gazinski, you are a scamp! A miserable scamp, Gazinski!' In vain he protested that he was not to blame, that he had done nothing intentionally to bring the situation about, and that it was impossible to get out of it, now; the provok-

ing instrument kept it up; 'Scamp—scamp!' until at last he said he would give her every opportunity to change her mind. To begin with, he would not hurry back; perhaps, left to herself, she would think better of it and he should not find her there.

"So he loitered. Nevertheless, when he opened the door, there she was. She started a little, and she was putting her cloak around her, which she had laid aside to make the tea, but then that might be only because she was cold; his attic was, in fact, not very warm.

"He excused himself for 'the unavoidable delay' and hastened to place the cakes upon the table, tearing the paper bag so that they fell about in magnificent profusion, for, of course, there was no plate. Nor was that, by any means, all that was lacking. Presently he saw her at a loss for something.

"'The sugar-tongs, monsieur?'

"'In your hand, mademoiselle,' he suggested, apologetically.

"Great astonishment! Then she colored, smiled, said 'Ah!' again, and put the sugar in his cup with her pretty little fingers.

"Such preliminaries over, they had only to address themselves to the banquet, but that part of the affair rather resembled the hearty meals which are eaten on the stage, for though they broke their cakes energetically and she was anxious to give him a

second cup of tea, the actual progress was small. He had a good deal to say to her, and was thinking it over. What she was thinking, who would venture to imagine? At last, he began:

"'Mademoiselle, when I see you condescend to this poor place and to my wretched hospitality, I am indeed over-powered.'

"'O, monsieur, everything is very nice,' she expostulated, and hastily took a sip of tea.

"'For once, perhaps, mademoiselle,—but for *always!* I tremble when I think of it. You, bred in the lap of ease—*you*, suddenly transported into the sordid atmosphere of poverty! I hardly know how to picture it to myself.'

"Her pretty eyes opened wide.

"'Why, monsieur, you surely do not suppose my father would let me suffer! I fear, indeed I—I know that this may cause him some pain just at first—dear papa! But he will forgive me. Yes, yes, he will! I assure you he could not do without me.'

"'But perhaps he could do without me, mademoiselle,' replied Gazinski, modestly, 'for it will then be both or neither. We shall be one.'

"'When he knows you, monsieur, all his prejudices will vanish,' she asserted, with a fine color in her cheeks.

"'You are too kind, mademoiselle. But even assuming that I might persuade him of the respect

with which his character would certainly inspire me, and of the affectionate devotion which I should so gladly render him as a son—still, as you yourself observe, he must know me first, and that is precisely what he will refuse to do. Fathers, in such a case, always refuse to see their son-in-law; it is solely on his account that they are angry with their daughter —that they forbid her the house—that they will not even allow her name to be mentioned in their presence.'

"She glanced upward as if appealing against such cruelty. Still all this did not apply to her. *Her* father could never be so stony-hearted.

"'He loves me, monsieur. He has told me times without number that my dear mother's place is mine, and that I must still remain the mistress of his house, even after'—she paused.

"'Even after your marriage,' he concluded. 'But that was when he expected you to marry some one whom he would consider worthy of you, mademoiselle, some one whose fortune entitled him to your hand. He was not thinking, then, of a poor drawing master as your husband.'

"'O monsieur, you do him wrong! It is my happiness that he will consider. Money is nothing to him where that is concerned, and you certainly will be at no loss to prove to him that money is nothing to you either.'

"She was looking at him with her sweet, innocent face like a child's, but, even if she saw him blush, she could not hear the bassviol going.

"'Precisely, mademoiselle!' he exclaimed, hardly knowing what he said, yet still with the idea of giving her another chance. 'Could I live upon your father's bounty? Think of passing the long, cold winter, in little cheerless, miserable apartments —no balls, no theaters, no concerts—and then, when summer comes, no pretty toilettes, no going to the seaside?'

"As he waved his hand around the attic to indicate the general appearance of her future home, her eyes followed the motion with an awe-struck air, yet when he had done, she only murmured gently:

"'And even should it be so, I suppose one can do without those things.'

"He looked at his watch.

"'It is time, mademoiselle. Shall I call a *fiacre?*' His voice shook.

"She said 'yes,' but turned as pale as death. She began to realize the momentousness of the step. Then, suddenly remembering, she slipped her hand furtively into her pocket.

"'If you would be so very kind as to take charge of this, monsieur.'

"It was a purse she held toward him! The effect of this action was as if she had pointed a pistol at him. He stepped back till he found himself against the door, and stammering, 'Keep it, keep it, mademoiselle!' burst out of the room and plunged down stairs again.

"This time no entrancing visions went with him; all he saw was that purse, and when he heard 'Scamp! Scamp!' he joined in and tried to find something worse to say; he called himself a low-minded rascal, unworthy of the name he bore.

"Meanwhile, as he had some little distance to go for a *fiacre*, this was another opportunity for her to escape, and in spite of the fact that the die was cast and his determination irrevocably taken, he heartily wished she might.

"But no! When he returned with the vehicle she was waiting, wrapped in the veil that was to serve as a disguise. They descended to the street with all precaution, and were fortunate enough to meet no one, but even when safe in the *fiacre* they were still silent, overcome by emotion. Only, after a while, as she noticed the street they were passing through, she asked timidly:

"'Does the driver know where to go, monsieur?'

"'Yes, mademoiselle, I told him.'

"After that not a word was spoken until, glancing again out of the window, she exclaimed:

"'Why, surely, this is not the way!'

"'Yes, mademoiselle—it is your way, though alas! not mine. When I saw how you trembled and turned pale, I knew that—that you regretted the step you had taken, and I—I gave the coachman orders accordingly.'

"They were trundling up the *Champs Élysées* and every now and then the light from the gas-lamps, flashing through the carriage, revealed a little figure with bowed head and turned quite away from him. Again and again he tried to say something which might make her position less intolerable and alleviate his own distress, but before her inexorable silence his voice died away; it was like speaking in an empty room. Only, at last, as they approached the palatial mansion which was her home, he made one final effort and simply said aloud what he was thinking, no more, no less.

"'Mademoiselle, if I had accepted the great honor and happiness you offered me I should have been indeed unworthy of you. As it is, when you look back on this, some day, with wonder and a smile, I trust you may remember too that at least it was a man of honor on whom you bestowed a passing fancy.'

"The carriage stopped. She let him touch her hand to help her down. It seemed almost as if she would have spoken, for she paused an instant, but all he

heard was a quick-drawn breath, then the great doors opened to receive her, and he went back to his lodging, where there was only a table in disorder to remind him that it was not all a dream, that Fortune had really been there in all her splendor, that she had fluttered about his little room with her many-colored wings, and then had bidden him farewell forever."

That was all. He was looking at us with a smile.

"No, no, not forever!" cried the dear old lady, quite impetuously. "The story must end well. Fortune came back to him one day, only in another form."

He shook his head slightly, and now his face was grave.

"By and by Gazinski did as his heart told him, but fortune had nothing to say to that. It was something else, then, that made the attic splendid." He was silent for a moment. "You know how courageous and heroic, how patriotic Polish women can be. But they carry their heroism into other fields, they know how to suffer in obscurity and cheerfully for those they love; they can fade away and die—in a decline—half of want—yet smiling still and protesting they lack nothing."

He had undertaken too much; he could hardly steady his voice to the end, and, when the old lady

leaned forward to lay her hand on his, the other hearer slipped into the next room and left them together.

I tell the tale as 't was told to me. Any one who likes can finish it, and imagine the banker's daughter married in splendor and having her balls and her *bains-de-mer*, while Wolowski and his sweet Polish wife were starving. Any one can draw the moral, too, that Polish luck is very much like all other luck in being home-made.

Looking back, I can hardly believe that he was with us for so short a time, but it was that same year and in the early spring that he departed, almost as suddenly as he came. He was called away, he said, and it was not difficult to guess who called.

He had told in one of his lectures how the Emperor Alexander, on his accession, visited Poland and made a speech setting forth his amiable disposition toward his Polish subjects, and the happiness which they might expect from his reign, but ending with the significant words, "Only, *no dreams*, gentlemen!" It looked, that spring, as if even the autocrat of all the Russias could not control dreams. The newspapers brought accounts of disorder in the streets of Warsaw. Poland was stirring in her sleep.

Everybody went to see him off—this stranger who had come among us so modestly and all unheralded.

Our local paper called it an *ovation*, and I suppose we girls, his class, might have stood for the *oves* very fairly, though, with all our silliness, I do believe it was a half-motherly feeling we had for him, too, when we saw that handsome face at the car-window for the last time, and the slender hand waving farewell.

Wolowski had promised to write to his old friend, and after some months had passed, a letter came. He was in Warsaw, and he said not a syllable about Poland, which meanwhile appeared to have subsided into quietude, but he wrote very sympathetically about our struggle, and mentioned the old peaceful days pleasantly. It was a charming letter, and it passed around from hand to hand until it was nearly worn out. We reckoned afterward that he would have received the reply not long before the Polish outbreak of 1863.

Our own war news was on the whole, so "reliable" that it was a great surprise to find when once it was "all quiet at Warsaw," that Polish victories had existed only on paper, that Polish troops had been nothing but little bands of half-armed and wholly undisciplined men against a hundred thousand Russians; that the insurrection had been a mistake from first to last; that the wisest heads had known it could never succeed; notwithstanding which, at the first signal, Poland's

sons, drawn as by a magnet from the four quarters of the globe, had stolen silently back to their country, many and many of them to leave it no more.

We never heard from Wolowski again. Of course that is not conclusive; he may be living yet—in Siberia, possibly even roaming the world in search of a maintenance on moderate terms. Nevertheless I have always believed that his luck, such as it was, ended there; that in that last desperate struggle for home and country, in one of those encounters, before the tide of battle turned against them, as it always did, and while yet it seemed that valor might accomplish something, he cheering on his men, pressing forward, as he hoped, to victory, was struck to the heart and fell with triumph in his face.

THE END.

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